

KOREAN CINEMA TODAY

SEPTEMBER • OCTOBER
2009 Vol.03



**MESSENGERS
OF KOREAN
CINEMA:
10 EXECUTIVES
FROM KOREAN
SALES
COMPANIES**



ISSN 2092-5158



KOFIC
Korean Film Council

MESSENGERS OF KOREAN CINEMA: 10 EXECUTIVES FROM KOREAN SALES COMPANIES



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illustration by Yi Chul-min

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KOREAN BLOCKBUSTERS MEET HOLLYWOOD CG TECHNOLOGY

Analyzing What *Chaw & Haeundae* Have Accomplished and Remained in the Industry by Collaborating with Polygon Entertainment for Visual Effects

By **PARK Hye-eun**

Recently two Korean-made blockbusters have bragged their CG-centric scenes: disaster movie *Haeundae* and monster-adventure movie *Chaw*. Dealing with unique subjects – devastating tidal wave and a man-eating boar – both movies, which stormed Korean box office, have been infused with Hollywood CG company to deliver more realistic effects. Above all, because most CG scenes were created using domestic CG technology, save for some water CG effects, *Haeundae* pushes the boundaries of local CG tech and is praised for its achievement.

“What if a familiar animal around us turns into a monster and threatens us?” The initial concept of *Chaw* drew from that question and director SHIN Jung-won finally came up with an idea of a man-eating boar for his monster movie. But since adventure movie that focuses on animal character is rarely made in Korea, the production team couldn't employ the proper visual special effects system capable of creating the image of a man-eating boar. So they turned to Hollywood. The director SHIN explains, “Because *Chaw* is a mammal fully covered with hair, more elaborated, sophisticated framework was required. While finding an experienced, specialized CG team in Hollywood, we heard Hans UHLIG of Polygon Entertainment was interested in the script of *Chaw* and decided to work together.” Polygon Entertainment is a California-based special effects studio that was founded in 2007 with several renown professionals including a Korean-American SHIN Dong-

yeop, who worked on *Superman Returns* and *Sin City* as CG supervisor; director Stefen FANGMEIER of *Eragon* and visual supervisor of *Jurassic Park* and *Terminator 2: Judgment Day*. They spent an entire year to create the man-eating boar, Chaw. *Chaw* was released on July 15 and scored 750,000 admissions in its opening week, not a bad result by any means.

JK YOUN of *Haeundae* also decided to consult Hollywood technological

experience to deliver a highly spectacular scene as the first Korean disaster movie. During pre-production, YOUN wanted to utilize Korean CG technology, but after several meetings with various local companies, he realized that creating a giant tsunami with Korean companies was impossible. YOUN explains, “In fact, there are only a few CG teams that can create the image of water convincingly even on a global stage. Suffering from

miniscule budget and tight timetable, we came across Hans UHLIG who supervised the water effects in *The Perfect Storm* and *The Day After Tomorrow* and eventually teamed up for our film.” Still hoping to blend Korean CG technology with that of Hollywood, YOUN entrusted vital water scenes to Polygon Entertainment and commissioned other CG scenes to the remarkable Korean CG company Mofac Studio.



Haeundae



Taking Lesson from the Accumulated Technological Experience of Hollywood

The biggest factor why *Chaw* and *Haeundae* chose Polygon Entertainment as their partner was obviously due to their reliable, accumulated experiences from

previous works in Hollywood blockbusters. The company started out by working on the new *Star Wars* trilogy and continuously developed skills in creature CG technology via movies including *The Sign*, *Lemony Snicket's a Series of Unfortunate Events* and in water CG technology seen in *The Perfect Storm* and *The Day After Tomorrow*. Therefore, teaming up with Polygon Entertainment was the best choice for *Chaw* and *Haeundae*, because the company was capable of delivering what each project required.

SHIN of *Chaw* says, "differentiating from a few previous Korean 'monster blockbuster', *Chaw* was another challenge because we had to create a beast from one already exists in real life, not one of imagination. It meant that audience already

knew what a boar looks like, so we had to spend a lot of time visualizing a beast in order to convince the audience that this was for real. Without having a monster designer, the process of turning an existing creature into another monster was not easy." Accepting an advice from Stefan FANGMEIER, who was the special effects supervisor for *The Lost World: Jurassic Park* and *Saving Private Ryan*, the production team segmented the creation process of *Chaw* into animatronics, stunt and CG version. "If making *Chaw* in full CG, it would take much more time, and the scene of *Chaw* would look like an animation. So, we decided to employ the animatronics method for detailed close-up scenes and also 'stunt works' for natural movement, in which a man inside a *Chaw* suit operated."



JK YOUN mentions of his partnership with Polygon Entertainment, "it was an inevitable choice to gain an equivalent level quality as seen in Hollywood disaster movies."



As the production went on, the portion of animatronics has been larger than that of CG. The production team took another lesson from collaborating with Hollywood experts.

JK YOUN mentions of his partnership with Polygon Entertainment, "it was an inevitable choice to gain an equivalent level quality as seen in Hollywood disaster movies. The level of Korean CG technology has been developed remarkably quick and a program for creating CG water is now available. However, the core technology for more detailed scenes, such as set during daytime, immense waves rush onto people and buildings, were developed from scratch for this film. *Haeundae* was a totally new kind of work and another challenge even to CG veteran Polygon."

A Dramatic Leap in Korean CG Technology

So, did both movies achieve the spectacles that they wanted from the partnership? The scenes in *Haeundae* proved that the partnership worked out effectively. As the director assured, the tsunami overwhelms the audience with its large-scaled impact. Showing the scene of tsunami with the height of a high-riser, the collapse of huge containers and crushing tsunami into

buildings are comparatively well-made even by Hollywood standards. As the director brags, "the most notable factor is that the movie takes place during the day so that we had to describe all the details of water flows and delicate water sprays. Due to this challenge, most Hollywood disaster movies are set against night backdrop or change the cut into the next scene before the impact between waves and subjects. But we vividly captured the moment of impact of tsunami onto buildings during daytime. An elaborated collaboration between Hollywood and Korean CG teams made it come true."

No one could doubt the CG quality of *Haeundae*. According to people in the CG industry, "creating water image with computers is one of the most difficult tasks in visual effects. Even in Hollywood, experts are still developing technology in order to represent the density of varying depth, color and movement in a realistic fashion. Since *Typhoon* and *The Restless*, Korean film industry has accumulated experience and technology, but there are still more things to learn. Nevertheless, the CG quality of *Haeundae* has pushed the limits of technology available at the time and gone enough to satisfy the audience who are accustomed to Hollywood blockbuster

movies."

JK. YOUN points out that this strategic collaboration will eventually be beneficial to Korean film industry. "We asked UHLIG to transfer the core source for CG water technology to Mofac Studio. It wasn't an easy decision for them, but finally we came to an agreement. Not only for *Haeundae*, but also it was crucial for the development of Korean film in the long term." As he hoped, Polygon Entertainment handed over the technology to Mofac studio and then, Mofac studio became capable of creating most of *Haeundae*'s remaining scenes based on the technology. "Korean CG technology is as good as other advanced countries. If we can blend the experiences from collaborating with Hollywood with our passion well, I am sure that Korean CG technology will be on par with the world class very soon."

Despite achieving notable development in a short period, Korean CG technology world has still more things to learn.

We will be able to learn and develop CG technology by collaborating with well-versed veterans in Hollywood.

As JK YOUN mentioned, "it won't take long for us to make blockbusters freely without borrowing hands from Hollywood CG technology."●

ANOTHER FILM BREAKS THE 10 MILLION ADMISSIONS BARRIER

Analysis of the Summer Box Office: July to August

By CHOI Kwang-hee

As the summer movie season approached, the anticipation for another movie that would surpass 10 million admissions began since May. The first potential candidate was Hollywood blockbuster *Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen*, because its predecessor still holds the local box office record for the most successful foreign movies with about 7 million admissions. The sequel was expected to be the first foreign movie to break 10 million admissions record in Korea.

While *Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen* drew similar score as the previous installment, the glory of breaking 10 million admission movie went to a Korean disaster blockbuster *Haeundae* which joined the summer box office competition quite late in the season. Aiming to be the first Korean disaster movie, *Haeundae* has stormed the box office since its opening and eventually achieved 10 million admissions on August 23, in 33 days. This means that 20% of the entire population of Korea has visited theaters to watch the movie and this is the 5th film in Korean film history to break 10 million admission mark after *Taegukgi*, *Silmido*, *King and the Clown*, and *The Host*.

There was another mega hit movie during the summer season, a sports movie about ski jump called *Take Off*. Released a week after *Haeundae*, this film has remained near the top of the box office more than a month and has drawn about 6 million admissions in total thus far.

Taking a closer look at *Haeundae* and *Take Off*, the two films have a lot of things in common, despite their different genres. Both films delivered new spectacles, whether it be tsunami or ski jump and employed a mixture of comedy and human drama. Above all, the strategy of *Haeundae* for arranging a variety of characters from all walks of life and a wide range of audience was one of the factors that contributed to its success. Surely, both films hadn't forgot comedic element as well, which Korean moviegoers always like to see in films.

With the big success of two Korean films, the Korean film industry seems to be bouncing back after a long period of recession. The success of the said films can't rejuvenate the entire industry fully, but they prove that Korean films are still dominant in the market,



TOP 10 BOX OFFICE FILMS

July ~ August 2009

Rank | Title | Date of Release | Distributor | Number of Screens | Admissions

1	Haeundae	2009/07/23	CJ Entertainment	1542	10,695,843
2	Take Off	2009/07/29	Showbox/Mediaplex, Inc.	1523	6,374,445
3	Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen	2009/06/24	CJ Entertainment	1628	3,974,448
4	Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince	2009/07/15	Warner Brothers Korea	1456	2,975,176
5	G.I. Joe: The Rise Of Cobra	2009/08/06	CJ Entertainment	1203	2,544,372
6	Chaw	2009/07/15	Lotte Entertainment	1170	1,789,264
7	Lifting King Kong	2009/07/01	N.E.W.	1179	1,254,811
8	Up	2009/07/29	Sony Pictures Releasing Buena Vista Film Korea	930	1,025,977
9	Running Turtle	2009/06/11	Showbox/Mediaplex, Inc.	933	980,367
10	Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs	2009/08/12	Twentieth Century Fox Korea	843	830,013

thus providing much confidence to Korean producers.

Meanwhile, another monster movie *Chaw* tried to attract audience equipped with adventure and comedic sense, but it didn't fare as well. For other Korean films, mostly thriller or horror films, such as *A Million*, about a group of contestants in a deadly reality survivor show, and *Possessed* taking Korean traditional shamanism as a medium with the dead, both came out in the season, but the results were lukewarm.

KOFIC NEWS

2009 Korea-China Business Campus Opens



Korean Film Council has commenced 2009 Korea-China Business Campus on Monday, September 21 in Seoul. Since the event was first held at Beijing in 2006, and later at Busan in 2007 and again at Beijing in 2008, Korea-China Business Campus had been proceeded in various formats covering seminars on China's film industry, market and policies, project pitching on film coproduction, technology demonstration, inspections on film-related organizations, as well as business meetings. This year's business campus was held in two parts, seminar on China's film industry and business meetings. The seminar was held under the theme of "Current status of China's investment, distribution and screening system and cooperation between Korea and China," presented by executives of Chinese companies and discussed together with Korean professionals, and it had been a useful time to look into China's investment, screening/

distribution system that are quite different from Korea's counterpart. In addition the business meeting was an opportunity for the seminar presenters and Korea's filmmakers to get together and achieve realistic exchanges.

For further inquiry, please contact Ms. Jiyeon PARK (heedong21@kofic.or.kr)

KOFIC Appoints CHO Hee-moon as New Chairperson

On September 7th, 2009, CHO Hee-moon was newly appointed as the new chairperson of Korean Film Council (KOFIC) by YOO In-chon, the Minister of Culture, Tourism and Sports. CHO has taken over the position that was vacated by the resignation of previous chairperson KANG Han-sup, who stepped down this past July. CHO will be in charge of KOFIC for the remaining period originally intended for KANG, which will end on May 27, 2011.

Previously, CHO Hee-moon held the position of vice chairman at KOFIC between 1999 and 2002. He takes over the chairperson duties from vice chairperson SHIM Sang-min, who served as interim chairperson since KANG's resignation.

CHO is a renowned film professor at Inha University with Ph.D. in Cinema, as well as the leading film scholar in Korean film academic circle, widely recognized for his in-depth researches on 'the history of Korean cinema.' He also has a broader understanding of film industry with his continuous and close working relationship with the current Korean film productions scene. During his introduction, CHO promised to make KOFIC "a professional center that all filmmakers can trust and rely on." KOFIC will soon officially announce new direction on its policies under CHO's administration.

For further inquiry, please contact Ms. JEON Yoon-hyung (docu99@kofic.or.kr)

Special Program Honoring the 25th Anniversary of KAFA at the 14th PIFF



Korean Academy of Film Arts (KAFA) celebrates its 25th anniversary this year, and will hold special program at the 14th PIFF to be opened on Sept. 8. The special program was prepared to trace back the footsteps and seek the future of KAFA, which was first established in 1984 and has since been the central organization in Korea's film production education.

In the Alumni Film Show Program, a total of 25 films will be featured, each selected from 25 alumni classes. The list includes *Chang-su Gets the Job* (Class 1) by KIM Eui-seok *Homo Videocus* (Class 7) by Daniel H. BYUN and E. J-yong, who turned around the trend of short films at the time with new formats and revolutionary sensitivity, *For Go-chul* (Class 9) that shows a different side of HUR Jin-ho, the master of melodrama, the legendary short film *Incoherence* (Class 11) that announced the beginning of BONG Joon-ho, *His Truth is Marching On* (Class 17) by SHIN Jane who directed the best cult film ever made in the Academy, *Garívegas* (Class 20) by KIM Sun-min, a film with social consciousness depicting sorrows of the laborers that were chosen as one of the best short films of the year at the time, which also won the Independent Film Prize of Korean Film Awards, and *Don't Step Out of the House* (Class 25) by JO Sung-hee, who was praised for this short film sweeping Cinéfondation 3rd Prize at Cannes.

For further inquiry, please contact Mr. PARK Joo-young (demian@kofic.or.kr)

"KOFIC SHOULD BECOME A PACEMAKER FOR THE FILM INDUSTRY"

New Chairperson of KOFIC, CHO Hee-moon

By CHOI Kwang-hee

CHO Hee-moon was appointed as the new chairperson of Korean Film Council on September 7, 2009. As a film scholar and former vice chairperson of KOFIC from 1999 to 2002, CHO succeeds KANG Han-sup, who resigned his seat in the middle of his term, and will take charge of the Korean film policy until May, 2011. Here is an interview about his vision and diagnosis on the Korean film industry.

What is your feeling on taking the position in such a difficult time?

I do understand there have been debates over controversial issues within the film

Korean film plays a major role in the trend. Of course, what made this possible were definitely the efforts of cineaste and people associated with. And I also think that the support of the government and the general public were additional important factor for making this possible.

What do you think about the role of KOFIC in the industry?

Looking back, I think it is ironic that the Korean film industry has bloomed when KOFIC has gone through a tumultuous period. Conversely, this ironic phenomenon proves that the role of KOFIC ultimately doesn't need to expand like it did once. Thus, I believe that the role of KOFIC should

film. That is why the entire film industry carefully observing the direction of KOFIC's supporting policy.

As I've mentioned, I think KOFIC's role should be an assistant or a supporter. But to do so, we need to check the efficiency of supporting done by KOFIC. In other words, we need to make an agreement on the direction of supporting first, whether supporting to increase the self-reliance of the industry or just supporting an urgent matter at hand. The history of KOFIC's supporting policy has been around for about 50 years now and its main mottos were supporting and rearing. I do understand that the supporting policy has

“It won’t be easy for the Korean film to overcome the current changes, but I’m sure that the changes will provide another opportunity for our film industry.”

community. But what I want to point out is that during this period, the status of Korean film has remarkably increased when considering the support from the audience and attention from abroad. With that point, I am quite optimistic about the future of Korean film industry. When things come to fruition, I come to think that there must be a sort of hidden energy inside us that we don't even realize. In fact, Korean films in the past decade, especially after *Sopyonje*, have proved and demonstrated this. When I studied cinema, studying cinema meant only researching foreign films and Korean films weren't considered even as a footnote. But at the moment, cinema became the center of our cultural activities and the

be a pacemaker or a good assistant, not a supervisor. Until now, it is true that KOFIC has involved in all aspects of the industry to maintain control. Some say that KOFIC is a supportive body, not an organization that gets involved, but consequently, KOFIC has promoted interventions and confrontations in the industry and resulted in shrinking self-reliance within the film industry. In short, KOFIC now has to put all the efforts into creating the environment and solid foundation for the industry. I think that the aim of KOFIC's support should also focus on increasing the self-reliance of the industry. **It is an undeniable fact that KOFIC's support on the film industry played a major role in the development of the Korean**

played a certain role in the development of the Korean film, but the time has come to change the direction now. The safety rules for infants should be clearly laid out by the adults. Setting a model with segmented stages and an evaluation system for the urgency or priority level, this new direction will be another driving force to push the limitation of the Korean film industry. **As a leading organization of the film industry, KOFIC has been frequently asked to present a clear vision for the industry.** It is natural to demand a clear vision to a leading organization. But instead of being a commander encouraging the soldiers to rush in, being a supporter and safety net for the industry will be more dependable

Photo by KIM Seon-tae



for the people in the film industry. I believe that the industry's demands to KOFIC are another way of expressing this. After all, KOFIC has to prove that we are working properly for the industry and cineaste, and

not some ulterior motive. **In recent years, the Korean film has suffered from a low earning rate and shrinking investments on the production.** We can evaluate the BP of each film case

by case, but focusing on how the overall flow goes is more important. It's like sometimes someone must die to ensure the safety of remaining of people in the jungle. Through a number of failures, we can learn lessons to succeed and realize new possibilities. Not all the films can be successful or win over the audience. The fair competition for success returns as a positive energy after all.

The level of self-reliance of the Korean film has remarkably increased and other countries took our model as an example for their own system. No need to respond to every small fluctuations in the industry, and it's time to be confident. However, we also need to be careful at the same time. The reason for the recent recession was that we were overconfident with sudden success in such a short period of time. The audience is delicate and cutthroat at the same time.

Korean film in the world stage has relatively decreased and the dynamic energy found in the Korean films since around the year 2000 has hardly been seen in recent films.

In the early phase when the Korean film has leapt internationally, I think what the foreign audience loved was the wildness or the raw image which the Korean films have shown. But nothing lasts forever and it soon goes out of date. Because the foreign audience can only access a few selected films, they might think the uniqueness of the Korean film has vanished in recent films. But I think those uniqueness and energy can still be found in Korean films. No matter what the nationality of the audience is, a film must live up to their anticipation, and the shift of the audience's attitude on film as a medium is a common phenomenon worldwide. I think the most threatening enemy to the industry is the new social environment and cultural alternatives the audience has access to. It won't be easy for the Korean film to overcome the current changes, but I'm sure that the changes will provide another opportunity for our film industry. Thus, the Korean film will keep adapting to the dramatic changes.🎬

AN ACTRESS, WHO STILL HAD MORE TO SHOW, BECAME A STAR

JANG Jin-young 1971~2009

By CHOI Kwang-hee

A remarkable Korean actress, JANG Jin-young, died of cancer in September 1, 2009 at the age of 37. It happened a year after she announced that she was suffering from stomach cancer. Taking a unique position in the Korean film industry, she has creatively played a variety of roles and characters, consequently, her tireless challenges and passions have nourished the widening of Korean film. Looking back on her filmography, we cherish the memories and body of works she left behind.

JANG became famous as an actress relatively late to her contemporaries. Making debut via the Miss Korea pageant, she has appeared on several commercials and some small roles, and then started getting attention with the role of Min-young, daughter of a wrestling gym manager in KIM Jee-woon's *The Foul King* (2000) when she was in her late 20s. Playing the character with strong charisma and personality, but with soft inner side, her dazzling performance became the focal point of industry people's attention. Not only having a beautiful appearance, she possessed an androgynous image and determined attitude. She successfully performed a number of characters which just fitted in the new era of Korean cinema.

The film that gave JANG a true turning point as an actress was the critically acclaimed horror movie *Sorum* (2001) by YOON Jong-chan. Playing a character who is abused by her husband, she delivered the best performance of her lifetime by portraying a wounded woman in despair. Above all, in the film, after burying her husband with her accomplice (KIM Myung-

min), an obsessive love scene still remains the acme of the film. Consequently, despite the lukewarm box office result, JANG became a promising actress whom most of directors and producers wanted to work with.

Since then, she took a safer route. By subsequently starring in melodramas *Over the Rainbow* with LEE Jung-jae and *The Scent of Love* with PARK Hae-il, she tried to build a smooth heroine image out of the fossilized strong image of Sun-yeong in *Sorum*. Ironically, in *The Scent of Love*, like forecasting her destiny, she played a character who was dying of liver cancer and left her loved ones behind.

In 2003, she returned as a lively single woman with high self-confidence in *Singles* (2003) by KWON Chil-in. Starring with UHM Jung-hwa, one of her contemporaries, the movie stormed the box office that year and proved that moviegoers expected to see her in more unique characters, not one in a conventional melodrama. Her role, Na-nan, is a much more practical, realistic single woman firmly grounded in reality and accepts her profession, friends, and her present conditions as they are, than any fantasy-oriented single women just dreaming of a fabulous life.

JANG challenged another leap with *Blue Swallow* (2005) by YOON Jong-chan. Playing PARK Kyeong-won, the first female aviator in Joseon Dynasty during the Japanese occupation, she seemed to project her desire to go beyond the limitation into the character. Thus, her struggles to become the character have been engraved in every scene of the film.

In a high degree aviation contest, when

her plane flies vertically far above the clouds, she screams to overcome the fear of death. Eventually, the plane reaches the peak nobody dared to cross and becomes a spot in the sky. The existence of a person who wants to be free from the burden of the history and the era is embodied in the scene through the physical body of JANG Jin-young.

Blue Swallow was an impressive movie, but it also was a misfortunate movie to her. The production had been delayed due to funding, after the movie was released, as pro-Japanese activities of PARK Kyeong-won became a social controversy, the box office score turned out to be dismal at best.

In the next movie *Between Love and Hate* (2006) by KIM Hae-gon, JANG went on further. She became a violent, tough bartender with a temper, Yeon-ah, having an affair with a man who has a fiancé, fully knowing that the relationship will not work out in the end. In this tumultuous movie full of quarrels and brawls, the female character obviously wasn't able to satisfy female audience, but it rather offended them. Consequently, the movie bombed at the box office.

Besides the success of *Singles*, her ongoing challenges and passion for creating refreshing characters weren't well received by general audience, at least, in terms of the box office output. However, JANG had put her efforts tirelessly to become a genuine actress and to find the identity as an actress, not to just be another entertainer. As one of dazzling jewels in the Korean film world, JANG Jin-young was an actress who still had more to show. ❶



MESSENGERS OF KOREAN CINEMA: 10 EXECUTIVES FROM KOREAN SALES COMPANIES

Apparently, growth of Korean cinema in the international stages has more meanings than mere export of domestic films. On one hand, it's a duty for Korean film industry to share culture, ideas or even agonies of Korea with the world in the era of globalization, while Koreans try to accept cultures from the others parts of the globe and to understand them. On the other hand, stimulated by responses from all around the world, Korean cinema can expand its perspectives and take another step for development. There is no doubt, therefore, about the fact that Korean sales companies play a significant role of introducing Korean cinema to the world. Their international business covers sales of completed titles to alliances and co-production foreign partners, and importance of their active interactions and building networks cannot be stressed enough. Here are the ten most active sales agents in Korean cinema. If you haven't heard of them yet, you will probably have a chance during your next film market. They are waiting to shake your hands.



Kini KIM **CJ Entertainment**

“SUCCESS COMES FROM RIGHT AUDIENCES AND PROPER RELEASE STRATEGY”



Photo by KIM Seon-tae

major film festivals such as Cannes, Venice and Berlin, then expanding sales territories with festival premium. *City of Violence* (2006), *I'm a Cyborg but that's OK* (2007) and *Secret Sunshine* (2008) were the films that were successful with this strategy. Particularly this year, it was one of the most challenging times for CJ with two major films: *Thirst* and *Mother*. Also, *Haeundae*, which performed extremely well in Korea, had also sold to many different countries including China and the US.

KIM asserts the importance of establishing conditions that render Korean films to meet international audiences in the most optimal way and offer filmmakers the proper courtesy as well. Loyalty and respect for Korean films and filmmakers are key elements for deciding local distributor. French distributor Diaphana, which acquired *Secret Sunshine* as its first Korean title, and Magnolia Pictures, US distributor of *Mother* and *Barking Dogs Never Bite*, could be perfect partners in this regard “I think Korean films are doing great in foreign markets and it's still growing,” says KIM. “For the past decade, CAGR(Compound Annual Growth Rate) of Korean films has not decreased. A sudden rise of export prices of Korean films in several markets including Japan in 2005 was exceptional - a bubble, to be precise. Now, the bubble has burst and we cannot be more realistic than ever. *Thirst* is going to be released in Brazil and it is the first time for Korean film to be released in the territory. It sounds very promising for Korean films in expanding the markets. For the future growth in the international markets, I cannot exaggerate the importance of finding proper target audience for each film and making best conditions for its successful release.”

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List of Films for Sale

Good Morning President Director JANG Jin
Killer Bride's Perfect Crime Director Goro Kishitani
Haeundae Director JK. YOUN

KIM Yun-jeong **FINECUT**

“LOOKING FOR GOOD FILMS, WHETHER KOREAN OR NOT.”



Photo by KIM Seon-tae

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List of Films for Sale

Like You Know It All Director HONG Sangsoo

A Brand New Life Director Ounie LECOMTE

Chaw Director SHIN Jung-won

Kanikosen Director SABU

IRIS:THE MOVIE Director KIM Kyu-tae, YANG Yun-ho

accessibility to various cultures as well. Titles the company deals with range from films by highly acclaimed helmers to ones with solid ideas and structure by up and coming directors. *The Chaser*, sold to most of the territories in the world, is one of the most successful films that shows the company's spirit. “If the film shows its potentials in world market,” says KIM, “it can be quite successful whether it's directed by the master or the youngblood.”

Recently, FINECUT expanded its activities to sales business of non-Korean titles and co-productions as well. Among its non-Korean titles, Argentine helmer Pablo TRAPERO's *Leonera* (2008) was selected in the official competition in Cannes, and Iranian film *Opium War* (2008) by Siddiq BARMAN, won the best film award at Rome Film Festival. But the most thrilling moment came when *Tuya's Marriage* (2006), which was introduced by Creative Artist Agency and ended up to being acquired by FINECUT, won the Golden Berlin Bear in Berlinale in 2007.

In 2009, FINECUT presented HONG Sangsoo's *Like You Know It All* and Ounie LECOMTE's *A Brand New Life* in Cannes. Complete version of *Chaw*, which was already sold to a number of territories, had private screenings in Toronto and several other titles including Japanese helmer SABU's *Kanikosen* in Pusan. For year of 2010, FINECUT has another big title: LEE Chang-dong's *Poetry*. “While keeping its professionalism based on experience and knowledge of exporting Korean films, FINECUT always opens its door for overseas partners from any territories, if the films are just right for us.”

By HAN Sunhee

In 2005, CJ Entertainment reorganized overseas sales bureau into Asian and American-European territories by acquiring international sales team from Cinema Service for more effective handling of enlarged overseas markets and lineups with increased number of titles every year. Kini KIM has been in charge of American-European markets.

“While Korean Wave and star power played a crucial role in promoting sales in Asian market, film festival premium offered the initial step into American-European markets. I supposed market demand would increase when Korean films were more visible in international film festivals.” Since then, CJ has succeeded at overseas markets with its strategy of three steps: finding local distributor first and introducing films at

By HAN Sunhee

FINECUT has played a pivotal role in expanding international business of Korean films since it was launched after parting with the former name of Cineclick Asia. Since the company's beginning, KIM Yun-jeong has handled a variety of films from auteur films such as *Oasis* (2002) by LEE Chang-dong, *A Tale of Two Sisters* (2003) by KIM Jee-woon, *Spring, Summer, Fall,*

Winter and Spring (2003) by KIM Ki-duk and to genre films like *Acacia* (2003), *The Doll Master* (2004), and *Red Shoes* (2005). “FINECUT is not pursuing only for art house films. It is the most crucial to find a proper company, which can show the biggest potentials in promoting and releasing each film in designated territory.”

FINECUT has established fame for selecting films with good quality and

Claire LIM **iHQ, Inc.**

“KEEPING ITS STRENGTH
IN INTERNATIONAL CO-
PRODUCTIONS”



Photo by KIM Seon-tae

manager, says, “It’s the strength of iHQ that the company have continued efforts in international co-productions. With years of experience, iHQ has built reputation with its successful co-productions.

There is no simple reason or know-how in this success, but a clear principle according to LIM: “It’s the most important to research the market thoroughly and bring up a proper marketing strategy. With help of networks the company has built, iHQ has plans to appeal its strength in the industry.” Regarding its network, Catherine PARK, director of international sales, who took the lead of international business of Korean films at the very beginning, has played a huge role in sales based on her solid network with oversea partners that brought success to the company for years.

LIM says, “It must be the company’s best strategy to try to use its networks to maximum capacity in order to secure best projects that assure its capability in the industry.”

iHQ has new titles for pre-sales including *Will It Show on X-Mas?*, an in-house production directed by CHOI Moon-seok (*What Happened in Bali*) with script by LEE Kyung-hee (*I Am Sorry, I Love You*) starring SO Ji-sub and HAN Ye-seul.☎



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List of Films for Sale

Will It Show on X-Mas?

Director CHOI Moon-seok

Dating My X-Wife Director TBD

By HWANG Hee-yeon

While most of companies put all the efforts in selling films, iHQ saw the potentials in selling projects ahead of them. For the first time from Korean film industry, iHQ has completed many co-productions with foreign partners including KWAK Jae-yong’s *Windstruck*, a co-production with Hong Kong-based Edko starring Gianna JEON and JANG Hyuk, Andrew LAU’s *Daisy*, starring

Gianna JEON and JUNG Woo-sung with many foreign crew members and Grace LEE’s documentary *American Zombie*, a collaboration with American production in 2007.

iHQ is still very active in proceeding international co-productions and its upcoming titles include a Korea-China co-production *Dating My X-Wife*. Claire LIM, the company’s international sales

Kay KWAK **INDIESTORY Inc.**

FOR ASIA’S INDIE FILM
NETWORK



Photo by KIM Seon-tae

By KIM Su-yeon

INDIESTORY is the only company in the country that sells Korean independent films internationally. It approaches the foreign market with its strong points of “differentiated sales of indie films with unique views and formats which are rarely seen in previous Korean films.” Therefore the biggest merit of Indiestory as an overseas sales company is its international indie

film network. INDIESTORY handles not only the theater distribution rights but also TV rights, DVD home video rights, and overseas screening opportunities through indie film groups. Every year 7 to 10 features films and about 70 short films are introduced to the world market through the company. According to Kay KWAK, broadcasting is still the main source of overseas sales, but other rights including DVD and archives are quite

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List of Films for Sale

Old Partner Director LEE Chung-ryoul

Bandhobi Director SHIN Dong-il

Fly Penguin Director YIM Soon-rye

One Step More to the Sea

Director CHE Ji-young

Show Me the Money Director CHOI Equan, NAM Da-jeong, KWON Jong-kwan, LEESONG Hee-il, KIM Eun-gyeong, YANG Hae-hun, Chegy, YOON Seong-ho, KIM Seong-ho, KIM Young-nam, SONG Il-gon

The Neighbor Zombie Director O Yeong-du, JANG Yoon-jung, RYU Hun, HONG Yeong-geun

active too. As for the consuming countries, European channels show highest purchase rate, and more recently South American channels are showing interest in Korean films too.

Films that KWAK gave priority during first half of this year were *Old Partner*, *Bandhobi*, *Fly Penguin*, *One Step More to the Sea*, *Show Me the Money*, *Dance of Time*, and *The Neighbor Zombie*. Especially in the case of *Old Partner*, a mega-hit documentary in Korea last year, its release in North America, Japan, Hong Kong and China have been confirmed, adding to its mounting success. Under the sales situation of indie films where TV broadcasting and DVD rights sales are more common than rights sales for theater release, it was the first overseas premiere for a truly long time, making the project even more meaningful.

Besides *Old Partner*, project INDIESTORY is aiming this year includes international co-productions. One of the films currently going through pre-production stage is *A Butterfly’s House*, the new work of Korean Chinese JIN Guang-hao who directed *Life Track*. This film will seek investors through this year’s PPP during PIFF Film Festival. In the long run, INDIESTORY plans to establish Asia’s indie film network to proceed collaboration projects of Asian indie films.☎

Jason CHAE **Mirovision Inc.**

IN SEARCH OF THE 'VISION' IN 'MIRO(MAZE)'



Photo by KIM Seon-tae

like *BUNSHINSABA* and *A.P.T.* were the heroes of the sales. However, the satisfying moments for president CHAE are the moments when well-made films like *Barking Dogs Never Bite* and *Memento Mori* that failed to make big money domestically come in the limelight overseas. He feels delighted doing the job when such attention from the outside "adds energy to the director's next work and which makes him feel he has contributed to the success of the director from then on."

President CHAE's concerns did not linger with overseas sales of Korean movies. In 2005, Mirovision became the first Korean film company to distribute in America when it co-distributed thriller *Sam's Lake* with Maverick Film. He will also participate as the Korean side producer in American version of *The Phone* next year. In addition Mirovision is also the overseas agency representing directors LEE Myung-Se and AN Byung-ki. Among the films sold through Mirovision in early half of 2009, the film that made the best results was *Death Bell*, which was sold to US, Germany, Taiwan, Malaysia, Brunei and Vietnam. In the meantime, for the latter half of the year, the focus of sales will be put on the line-up of finished films like *Lifting King Kong*, *The Executioner*, *A Good Night Sleep for the Bad* and *Today and the Other Days*, as well as films produced by Mirovision that includes *Girlfriends*, *Housemaid 2010* (remake of director KIM Ki-young's classic), *Tomorrow News*, *Reckless* (the new film by LEE Myung-Se), and Hollywood remake of *The Phone*. ❶

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List of Films for Sale

The Boat Director KIM Young-nam

Lifting King Kong Director PARK Geon-yong

The Executioner Director CHOE Jin-ho

A Good Night Sleep for the Bad

Director GWON Yeong-cheol

Today and the Other Days Director CHOI Wi-an

By KIM Su-yeon

Back when the Korean overseas sales market was so barren that the concept itself was unclear, Jason CHAE had founded Mirovision. The history of Mirovision started with the ambition to search Korean films that can make the 'vision' in a tough reality like 'miro' (which translates to 'maze' in Korean), and have them recognized internationally. Since its foundation in 1998,

President CHAE has achieved impressive developments with the company in those 11 years. Starting from being the first Korean company to set up sales booth in 1999 Cannes International Festival, during the Hanryu Wave period the company has also presented more than million-seller films on the market, including *BUNSHINSABA* - *Ouija Board* (USD 3M) and *A.P.T.* (USD 2M).

On the side of financial achievement, films

Michelle SON **M-Line Distribution**

CONCENTRATING ON THE NICHE MARKET, FREE FROM THE STEREOTYPE



Photo by KIM Seon-tae

By KIM Su-yeon

M-Line Distribution is a newborn sales company, established just a year ago in September 2008. Michelle SON who founded the company is an expert in the field with multiple years of experience in overseas sales by working at Korea Pictures and Show East. SON has secured diverse line-up of films from box office hits to independent art films.

On top of the M-Line sales list this first half year are *Scandal Makers*, *A Frozen Flower*, *My Girlfriend is an Agent* and *The Naked Kitchen*. In addition there are several films that were invited to foreign film festivals. Film critic CHUNG Sung-il's director debut *Café Noir* was invited to the International Film Critics Week at Venice Film Festival while JEON Soo-il's *I Came From Busan* is an official selection at

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List of Films for Sale

Paju Director PARK Chan-ok

A Little Pond Director LEE Sang-woo

Café Noir Director CHUNG Sung-il

YOGA Director YOON Jae-yeon (European Territories only)

Closer to Heaven Director PARK Jin-pyo

(European Territories only)

San Sebastian Film Festival, and *Searching for the Elephant* will compete at Warsaw International Film Festival. In the case of *Scandal Makers*, which is in talks for remake is being proceeded with director Barry SONNENFELD, the company is making aggressive moves to create possibilities for domestic licensors to participated in this remake project.

Sales plan of managing director Michelle SON is to be free of stereotypes and to aggressively tackle the niche market. As in most cases specialized genre films are strong in Europe and star vehicle romance or comedy films do well in Asia, the trend is to set sales plans accordingly. However, M-Line has succeeded in sales by taking an opposite strategy. Most recent case is *My Girlfriend is an Agent*. This romantic comedy starring Hanryu stars was a sales product that can be easily limited to Asian territories, but M-Line had actively introduced the film to the American and European buyers, pitching the film as the Korean version of *Mr. & Mrs. Smith*. As a result, at the Cannes market the film was successfully sold to a German company that used to prefer genre films only.

In the latter half of 2009, M-Line's main line-up consists of various genres and characters-centric films including commercial films like *WOOCHI* by CHOI Dong-hoon, *Closer to Heaven* by PARK Jin-pyo and LEE Yoon-ki's *Once We Loved* (working title) to art films like *Café Noir*, *A Blind River* and *I am from Busan*. ❷

Wayne LEE Prime Entertainment

“LOOKING FOR TRUSTFUL PARTNERS FOR SOLID COLLABORATION”



Photo by KIM Seon-tae

By HWANG Hee-yeon

According to the news from Screen International’s Cannes Daily this year, Prime Entertainment is the only Korean company that runs international sales business in collaboration with overseas production company. Odin’s Eye Entertainment, an Australia-based production, distribution and international sales company, partnered up with Prime in mutually beneficial alliance.

Wayne LEE says, “Odin’s Eye has built solid network with companies from Europe and other territories. We’ve got positive outcomes from our alliance with them.” It was last year’s Berlinale that the two companies got together for the first time. They ended up opening a joint sales booth in Cannes film market this year. Speaking of its successful alliance, LEE says, “Alliance with Odin’s Eye allows us to build bigger



network with overseas partners with credibility and it clearly affects our sales contracts. Also, we can avoid disadvantageous contracts and establish a system for sales business of all times.”

Prime Entertainment expands its business to international co-productions. Up until recently, the company put priority in productions and selling completed titles that were sometimes not really attractive for foreign buyers. For the past few years of researching international markets, the company is now in active search for partners that can collaborate with from the very beginning of a project. “For *Home Exchange*, a co-production with Japanese company, we put exactly same amount of finance from both and revenues from theatrical releases and additional incomes will be divided exactly fifty-fifty as well. Even on a personal level, it’s very fruitful for me to make it happen.”

Along with *Home Exchange*, Prime is now presenting *Papa*, HAN Ji-seung’s family drama. Since *Papa* is going to shoot in the US for most of its locales, the company is looking for a proper US partner. “We are in discussion with US producers and it looks promising. If it goes well as we planned, it would be another successful case just like *Home Exchange*,” says LEE. The company clearly made its steps for international markets on the right track.●

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List of Films for Sale
Home Exchange uncredited
Papa Director HAN Ji-Seung
Desperate Hours Director YOO Sun-dong

Judy AHN Showbox / Mediaplex, Inc.

EXCAVATING AND INTRODUCING HIGH QUALITY MOVIES WITH CONSISTENCY



Photo by KIM Seon-tae

By KIM Su-yeon

It was in 2002 when Showbox began international sales and a total of 86 films have been distributed so far. Among these films, Judy AHN is responsible for the sales of 75 films. It is valuable fruit she has born, striving through thick and thin with the Korea’s second biggest distributor starting with *Taegukgi* in 2004. Although it is not possible to numerically evaluate someone’s

career, just looking at these numbers on her distribution list might as well be the ‘history’ of Showbox’s international sales team.

The most memorable project for her was *D-War* by director SHIM Hyung-rae which was a hot commodity. The film participated in twice as many markets in comparison to any other works, and with an ever-growing influx of inquiries the workload was immense. Thanks to invitations from countless markets

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List of Films for Sale
Take Off Director KIM Yong-hwa
Possessed Director LEE Yong-ju
The Sword with No Name Director KIM Yong-gyun
The Actress Director E J-yong
Secret Reunion Director JANG Hun

for *D-War*, she was able to create new networks of buyers from the Middle East, South America and Eastern Europe. While sales marketing numerous films, AHN has set her own sales principle, “to constantly find films that are true to the basics and of high quality that do not depend on star actors and directors, and have them introduced and merchandized to international audiences.”

The movie of the year that fits the bill the most is *Breathless* by YANG Ik-june. *Breathless* received passionate responses from countless international film festivals, and it was a meaningful project as it was a rare case of an independent film entering the overseas market. On top of that, during the first half of this year, Showbox has focused its sales on *The Scam* and *More Than Blue* starring PARK Yong-ha and KWON Sang-woo charging their respective films in leading roles. These two films were sold to Japan and other Asian countries. On the other hand, during the latter half of the year, the company plans to put its efforts in films like *The Sword with No Name*, *Possessed* and *Secret Reunion*. Among them, *The Sword with No Name* has already pre-sold to 6 different countries. Currently in production is *Secret Reunion*, a project that became an issue outside its native territory as well thanks to the double casting of SONG Kang-ho and GANG Dong-won. The film focuses its sales in the Japanese market, packaged as a film that will carry on the success of previous films on the subject of divided Korea just as *Swiri*, *JSA: Joint Security Area*, and *Taegukgi* had done in the past.●

PARK Joo-young **Sidus FNH**
“PROMISING CO-
PRODUCTION PROJECTS
WITH A-LIST HELMERS”



Photo by KIM Seon-tae

such as DMB, IPTV and Wi-Bro, not to mention international sales fueled up by many successful titles. PARK Joo-young, who spent three years as manager of international sales at Prime Entertainment, now plays a pivotal role of taking over the company's overall international business. During her days at Prime, PARK handled international distribution of *Never Forever*, the first Korea-US co-production title. She also succeeded in distributing IM Kwon-taek's *Beyond The Years* to European territories and proved her capability again by completing the remake contract of *7 Days* starring KIM Yun-jin, PARK is not shy of “using her know-how's from experiences” to promote new titles from Sidus FNH.

“There are about 10 projects in development or in production. 2009-2010 line-up includes JEON Yoon-su's *Exit to Exit*, RYOO Seung-wan's *Enforce*, SOHN Jae-gon's *Villain and Widow* and KWON Hyung-jin's *Wedding Dress*.” PARK also puts emphasis on co-production projects with A-list helmers from all around the world, which will be officially revealed to the public at Busan in October. Sequels of former hits from Sidus FNH also will catch attractions from the industry. Also Sidus FNH will present a highly anticipated Korea-HK co-production titled *One Armed Swordsman*, Korean remake of a 1967 martial arts film by the legendary Hong Kong helmer CHANG Cheh. “We've already secured oversea investments covering up more than half of total budget. KIM Sung-su (*The Warrior*) is now taking lead of production,” says PARK. Undoubtedly, it's the crème de la crème.☎

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List of Films for Sale

Exit to Exit Director JEON Yoon-su
Enforce Director RYOO Seung-wan
Villain and Widow Director OHN Jae-gon
Wedding Dress Director KWON Hyung-jin

By HWANG Hee-yeon
In 2005, Sidus FNH underwent a complete transformation. It was born from the merger between Sidus Pictures, a prominent production company known for introducing talented filmmakers' works in a wide range of different genres and budget, and FnH Pictures, a company proved its capability from project development to production and achieved commercial success with the

help of partnership with KT, the biggest Korean telecommunication company. Based on experiences and passions of two former companies, Sidus FNH produced mega hits including *Tazza: The High Rollers* by CHOI Dong-hoon, *My Scary Girl* by SOHN Jae-gon and *A Dirty Carnival* by YOO Ha. The company expands its business range from theater productions, TV shows to new growing media industries

EJ CHO **United Pictures**
“SEARCHING FOR
COLLABORATION WITH ANY
TALENTED PARTNER”



Photo by KIM Seon-tae

By HWANG Hee-yeon
United Pictures, an investment company was founded in 2007 as a joint venture of three prominent producers: LEE Tae-heon, SHIM Bo-kyoung and LEE Yu-jin. Since the beginning, United Pictures has handled finances and international sales, and collaborated with M-Line for international sales of YOO Ha's *A Frozen Flower*, MIN Gyu-dong's *Antique* and CHOI Ho's *Go Go*

70s, all of which were successful especially in Asian markets including Japanese. In 2009, United Pictures is targeting the international markets quite vigorously. EJ CHO is in charge of oversea business for the company since early this year after departing with FINECUT. Speaking of the company's future plan, CHO says, “Basically, we are looking for not only potential markets for sales, but also possible partners from

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List of Films for Sale

YOGA Director YOON Jae-yeon
Closer to Heaven Director PARK Jin-pyo
Lovers Vanished Director CHO Chang-ho
WOOCHI Director CHOI Dong-hoon

every interest groups; foreign production companies, distributors, a variety of talents including writers, filmmakers and actors. I've been to many different markets with titles and had met a lot of professionals from the industry. Now, we are seriously considering many different ways of collaborating with these partners. As those collaborations usually take more time than one might think, we try to make results in lesser time based on solid mutual trust.”
This year's goal for United Pictures is to promote the company and its business plans in the industry worldwide, as well as a slew of new titles waiting in the wings. CHO carefully expects to see some results from markets at the end of this year and says, “There are companies approaching us for pre-purchase of new titles and investments for pre-productions. It seems to be a successful year for us.”
United pictures have new highly anticipated titles including YOON Jae-yeon's *YOGA*, a horror film released this past August, *Close to Heaven*, a new melodrama by PARK Jin-pyo (*You Are My Sunshine* and *Voice of a Murderer*), *Lovers Vanished* by CHO Chang-ho, which is in post-production now, and *WOOCHI*, a new urban action adventure of CHOI Dong-hoon.(*Tazza: The High Rollers*) for all territories except Europe (M-Line takes charge of European territories for those titles). United Pictures have just arrived in the industry, but its strongest weapon indicates they're here to stay.☎

The Meaning of PIFF

The next decade for PIFF might be more difficult than the previous one, when its primary task was to build on its successes. Now it must ensure that it maintains its focus and works to improve the overall quality of the festival – which is probably a greater challenge than it appears to be.

By Darcy PAQUET (Koreanfilm.org)



The Pusan International Film Festival, once considered a cheeky upstart among Asian film festivals, is now in its 14th year and looking decidedly mature. Most people consider it the continent’s leading film festival, at least in the sense of it being an important regional gathering place and the best place to watch new Asian films (outside of Cannes, Venice and Berlin, which these days are scooping up more and more Asian films for themselves). PIFF has grown steadily bigger and more ambitious year by year, to the point that it is now a bewilderingly large and complex event. This year’s festival will feature over 350 films. It’s hard to imagine the Korean film industry without PIFF, but in this article I’d like to do just that. The question bears asking: how has this festival affected the development of Korean cinema? Although almost every film industry in Asia has a festival of some sort that showcases local cinema, few are able to command so much attention among critics, programmers, and industry figures from around the world. What are the benefits of having a leading film festival in your own backyard? What is

the meaning of PIFF?

Let’s start with the obvious. Many Korean films have received international exposure by screening in Pusan, that has helped them to secure invitations to other festivals around the world. This has been particularly helpful for films by unknown, debut directors. A large number of programmers attend Pusan, and conversation among them naturally turns to which new Korean films are worth watching. Those that draw the most attention during Pusan often go on to receive their international premiere at Rotterdam, Berlin, Sundance, Karlovy Vary or Cannes. For major, established directors this is not as much of an issue, because programmers already follow their films quite closely, but many young directors receive a boost. A case in point from last year’s PIFF is BAEK Seung-bin’s *Members of the Funeral*, which went on to screen in Berlin’s Forum section. A debut feature produced by the Korean Academy of Film Arts, the film might otherwise not have come to the attention of European programmers.

Another important benefit that the festival has brought to the industry is the opportunity to informally meet and network with film industry figures from around the world. In some ways this may be Pusan’s biggest strength in relation to other Asian festivals. PIFF is like a big party – and the

Asian film industry needs that. Many of the partnerships and business relationships that tie Korean cinema to the rest of the world were first forged in Pusan. If the festival didn’t exist, there would still be a small group of people within the Korean film industry who would travel abroad regularly and forge contacts: employees of international sales companies, the Korean Film Council, etc. But PIFF has brought a much broader cross section of the local film community into contact with producers, investors, journalists and programmers from around the world.

As the stature and confidence of the festival has grown, it has become more common for Korean organizations to take a leading role in efforts to support filmmakers and shape regional policy. The Pusan Promotion Plan (PPP) was launched in 1999 as Asia’s first project market, and its success has inspired other Asian film festivals to follow suit. PIFF also now operates an Asian Cinema Fund which provides post-production financing and other kinds of support to up-and-coming directors from across Asia. This is not an entirely selfless gesture, as it helps the festival to secure films for its program, and it also helps to raise the event’s stature in general. On the industry side, the Busan Film Commission used the festival as a launching pad for the

Asian Film Commissions Network (AFCNet), a regional network of organizations devoted to providing support for location shooting. The relationships forged by the network have proven invaluable to many Korean productions shooting in Japan, Thailand, Vladivostok and other regional locations. The BFC’s newest effort is a film policy summit that attracts government officials responsible for film policy to Pusan in order to discuss ways to support filmmakers.

All of these endeavors help Korea to be seen as a leader in the region, which benefits the country in many ways. For the city of Pusan in particular, PIFF has become an important part of its identity. Tourism ads for the city always feature a prominent clip from the festival, and in recent years the city has stepped up its efforts to be recognized as a filmmaking hub. Many local film productions, and a few foreign ones, choose to shoot in Pusan due to its varied landscapes and easy logistics. Studio space and a new postproduction facility have been built to attract more filmmakers. But the city’s effort to market itself as a center for filmmaking would be far more difficult if PIFF were not as successful as it is.

In the year that PIFF was launched, 1996, there was broad consensus that Hong Kong was Asia’s leading film festival. This was where the region’s most exciting films

were introduced, and where critics and programmers most wanted to attend. The fact that Hong Kong was also home to Asia’s most exciting film industry surely played a large part in this as well. In the end, as Hong Kong’s film industry began to slide, it was surprisingly easy for Pusan to displace it. Should PIFF now be looking in the rear view mirror?

To be sure, this is a different era, so it’s hard to make predictions. Given that the big European festivals are programming a broader range of Asian films than ever before, it is unlikely that any Asian film festival will be able to establish itself as a place where films by JIA Zhang-ke, Johnnie TO, PARK Chan-wook, KUROSAWA Kiyoshi, Apichatpong WEERASETHAKUL and other top directors receive their international premiere. Instead, festivals in Asia succeed by being well organized, professional events that fill a certain need for its audience.

The biggest challenge for any film festival is not to grow, or to become more famous, but to establish its niche. In the 1980s and 1990s, the Hong Kong film festival was known for its focus on Chinese language cinema. Now it is better known for its market, which is considered far more successful than Pusan’s own Asian Film Market. One of the key factors behind PIFF’s success was its decision to focus on Asian cinema. In recent years the focus has sharpened to lower budget,

independent Asian films, and it is likely to maintain its leading role in this sector for some time to come.

If any other Asian festival is to surge to greater prominence in the coming years, it will likely do so by finding a new niche to exploit. To date, some of the other big film festivals in Asia – Tokyo, Shanghai, Bangkok – have not defined their niche as clearly as Pusan. PIFF has also been seen as being better organized than its competitors. But Shanghai and Tokyo in particular clearly have the potential to raise their profile higher in the future. If one of them were to focus on somewhat larger scale, commercial Asian films, which Pusan has comparatively neglected, then it might evolve into a stronger competitor.

The next decade for PIFF might be more difficult than the previous one, when its primary task was to build on its successes. Now it must ensure that it maintains its focus and works to improve the overall quality of the festival – which is probably a greater challenge than it appears to be. Some of the festival’s decisions in recent years, such as the swelling of the program from 200 to over 350 films, may end up doing more harm than good in this regard. But I’ll be hoping for the best, because the Korean film industry has a lot to lose if its leading film industry falters. ●

A FESTIVAL OF RIPEN TRADITION AND NEW STIMULATION

The 14th Pusan International Film Festival is preparing its most fulfilling and meaningful feast with the biggest budget ever. A record of 355 films from 70 countries around the world will be screened and many special side programs and guests invited to the event are also noteworthy. Take a look around this year's PIFF.

By HAN Sunhee

First of all, this year's notable invitations: in the 'A Window on Asian Cinema' the representative section of PIFF, films include the new works by major directors who are on the rise in Asia like TSAI Ming-Liang, KORE-EDA Hirokazu, Bahman GHOBADI and Pen-ek RATANARUANG and outstanding attempts is notable in capturing the dynamic trend in Iraq, Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Nepal, which were neglected in the world's major film scene until very recently. In particular, invitation of a number of Southeast Asian films and directors including *15 Malaysia* and *Sawasdee Bangkok* are prominent. Special section to show the

efforts of PIFF's intention to grasp Asia's film scene with depth and breadth, which includes retrospective on Hong Kong film master Johnnie TO, special screening of the 'emperor' of India's Bollywood films Yash CHOPRA, who received this year's Asian Film Award, and Filipino indie film genealogy that looks into the history of Philippines cinema that brought many directors who are receiving world's attention.

The change of 'Flash Forward' into a competition section stands out the most in the World Cinema category. By inviting the first or second film of non-Asian directors and have them screened and awarded, PIFF has reflected its will to pay consistent attention in finding new directors from around the world. Also uniquely there will be 6 films from African continent, a part of the world that has not been fully introduced to PIFF until now. Moreover, there will be a sub section of 'Masters' in the World Cinema Program, a selection of newest films by the greatest directors of our time, as well as those made by the directors who are invited to the festival as the jury. Film manias will be more than satisfied with *The White Ribbon* by Cannes Palm d'Or Award recipient Michael HANEKE, *Sweet Rush* by Andrzej WAJDA, *Vincere* by Marco BELLOCCHIO, and this year's most important guest Jean-Jacques BEINEIX's *Diva* and Costa GAVRAS' *Z*.

For the past 2 years, overall sense of Korean films had been on its decline but films to be introduced this time will show the major 'events' of this year in Korea,



Photo by KIM Seontae

proving Korean film industry still stands strong. Most importantly Pusan Film Festival had chosen director JANG Jin's *Good Morning President* and by doing so the organization tries to encompass both popularity and artistry. Such effort of the festival can be confirmed again in the Korean film line-up of other sections too. *The Fair Love* starring AHN Sung-ki, director MIN Kyu-dong's *In My End is My Beginning*, *A Little Pond* the long prepared work of Korea's major production company

Q&A Festival Director KIM Dong-ho

Q. What was your biggest concern as the film festival director?

It was the invitation section. The quality of a film festival will only rise with fine guests, thus I believe it is important to have many good directors and actors to come and visit. To do so I directly called or met directors and actors from in and out of the country, and I put in elaborate efforts for special guests. For example, in case of Costa GAVRAS I persuaded him for 3 years ever since I

first met him in Paris. When I received the City of Paris Medal he was the president of Paris Cinemateque and I asked him to come to our festival as the jury. At the time, he turned down the offer by saying it is not right for a director to be the jury, but then later he attended Venice Film Festival as the chief jury. So when I heard his newest film *Eden is West* was selected as the closing film of Berlin Film Festival, I flew to Berlin and persuaded him once more. I met with director TRAN Anh Hung of *I Come With The Rain* several times too and succeeded in inviting him this year.

Q. What are some of the most important features of the invitation films?

We had turned Flash Forward section into a competitive process to find and introduce not only the Asian but also non-Asian directors. In particular, films from remote, neglected regions that were hard to come in contact were invited in large numbers. Until now, there were rarely any channels for African films so we had no other way but invite films that were already introduced in other major international film festivals. This year, our programmer visited a film festival held in Burkina Faso and established networks and was able to bring back 6 good films with him. In addition it is meaningful that we have enlarged our boundaries by inviting films from Southeast and Central Asian countries like Bangladesh, Nepal, and Uzbekistan.

Q. How is the relationship with PIFF and other international film festival evolving?

Many foreign film festival staff members wish to visit Busan and are showing much interest. In the end I believe networking is the key. This year we have visited various film festivals including Africa's Burkina Faso and Guadalajara in Mexico. Also, there had been film festival in the old capital of Poland Krakow for the second time and we visited there to participate in the seminar. It is a small but interesting film festival focusing on independent films. Back in its first year, the festival had established the 'Sundance in Krakow' program in cooperation with Sundance Film Festival, and this year it has decided to have 'PIFF in Krakow' making future exchange of independent films between Poland and Korea. There will be much more chances for international networking in the future.

Q. Other major overseas film festivals have invited many commercially successful films.

Pusan Film Festival has a consistent goal of focusing on art and independent films and finding new directors in Asia to support the industry. The concept is consistent too in finding and selecting film projects based on such goal. Of course this year we have taken another step and tried to find films that public will like, and films with artistic values but also interesting. There had been films seen by 10 million, 7 million viewers this year in Korea, but I believe it was a good year as the independent film movement achieved unprecedented success. It is quite significant that PIFF has supported *Old Partner* and *Breathless*, two independent films that received the most attention this year. Also, director Aditya ASSARAT and his *Wonderful Town* that received support from PIFF have traveled to various film festivals around the world. We hope to see such films again this year. ❶



THE 4th EDITION OF PIFF COMPANION MARKET

Pusan International Film Festival’s Asian Film Market is steadily carving out a niche for itself in the fall calendar while endeavoring to fulfill its aim of supporting the development of the Asian film industry.



By Jean NOH

With a budget boost from Busan Metropolitan City – which aims officially to become a hub for the Asian audiovisual industry – and increased sponsorship for the Pusan International Film Festival (PIFF), the Asian Film Market is investing in its future, with plans to barrel through the global economic downturn. Conscious of the competition it faces in the autumn festival and market calendar, the market this year offered different incentives to attendees, including early bird registration discounts and hotel accommodations for exhibitors.

In its fourth year, the Asian Film Market will host 72 companies from 22 nations opening 44 sales offices in the Seacloud Hotel on Busan's Haeundae Beach between October 11~14. After taking in feedback from the previous year, the market is consolidating its venues so that the Pusan Promotion Plan (PPP) and sales offices will be in the same place this year, with market screenings to be held all in the Haeundae Megabox cinemas. Consensus last year was that the market



The Good, The Bad, The Weird

was quiet but productive, with Pusan remaining a choice networking opportunity as in previous years. But despite the "quietness", a slew of deals were done at the Asian Film Market, including locally-related one such as Korea's CJ Entertainment selling KIM Jee-woon's hit *The Good, The Bad, The Weird* to Celestial Pictures Limited (Hong Kong) and NonStop Entertainment (Sweden), as well as Germany's Bavaria Entertainment

selling Philip Gronning's *Into Great Silence* to JinJin Pictures for Korea.

Deals by non-Korean players got signed as well, such as Hong Kong's Mei Ah Entertainment selling *The Butterfly Lovers* to Splendid Film (Germany) and Vendeta Films (Australia), while Japan's TBS sold *Tokyo Girl* to Edko Films (Hong Kong) and Argentina's FilmSharks sold *The Photograph* to SBS (Australia).

Strong Market Screenings, Sales Agents and Buyers

This year's number of market screenings has gone up from a little over 40 last year to 60. The 48 films to screen include PARK Jin-pyo's latest melodrama *Closer To Heaven*, Francois OZON's Toronto festival film *Le Refuge*, Fadi HINDAS's documentary *Not Quite The Taliban*, and Leon DAI's *No Puedo Vivir Sin Ti*– Taiwan's official entry to the best foreign language film category of the Academy Awards.

This year's exhibitors include well-known companies such as the Scandinavian outfit Trust Nordisk, Japan's Toei Company, Hong Kong's Golden Network Asia, Taiwan's Three Dots Entertainment, and all the major and minor Korean sales companies such as CJ Entertainment, Showbox/Mediaplex, FINECUT and M-Line Distribution.

Notable registered buyers include Focus Features, Magnolia Pictures and The Weinstein Company from North America; in addition to China's Bona International, France's Celluloid Dreams and Diaphana Distribution, India's Star Entertainment and Japan's SPO.

BIFCOM – Showcasing Locations and Technology, Bringing Together Policy-Makers

Also under the Asian Film Market umbrella, the Busan International Film Commission & Industry Showcase (BIFCOM) will be held Oct. 12~14 at the Paradise Hotel on Haeundae Beach.

In addition to hosting booths for locations organizations and post-production houses, BIFCOM will hold seminars which will include one on case studies of worldwide locations

for Warner Brothers pictures such as James Cameron's *Avatar*, which was shot in New Zealand, and the blockbuster *Transformer 2*, which shot in Jordan.

Other seminars will include one from the Electronics and Telecommunications Research Institute (ETRI) and digital arts company Macrograph, which will hold a VFX tech demonstration and seminar on the recent Hollywood film they worked on, *The Forbidden Kingdom*.

BIFCOM will also host "Film Policy Plus", the Asian Film Policy Forum, Oct 13 ~ 14

at the Novotel, also on Haeundae Beach. Policy and decision-makers, from more than a dozen member countries of the Asian Film Commission Network (ACFNet), will attend the Forum – including representatives of the Japan Film Commission, China's Changchun Film Studio, the Royal Film Commission of Jordan, the Film Development Council of the Philippines, Indonesia's Ministry of Culture & Tourism, and the Korean Film Council. Representatives from Finland and Sweden will be participating in the events for the first time this year, too. ●

Mini EAVE (European Audiovisual Entrepreneurs)

As a training, development and networking program for audiovisual producers in Europe, EAVE has seen more than 900 graduates from 30 countries since 1988, many of whom have gone on to win awards at festivals like Calles, Berlin and Toronto. Next year, EAVE together with PIFF, the Friuli Venezia Giulia Film Commission and the Udine Far East Film Festival will hold a two-week workshop for European and Asian producers entitled "Ties That Bind". As a prelude to this workshop, a Mini EAVE program will run Oct. 11 ~ 13 this year at the Paradise Hotel. The Mini EAVE will comprise seminars dealing with the European market, Asia-Europe co-productions, and also a structural analysis of PARK Chan-wook's film *Old Boy*.

KPIF (Korean Producers In Focus) 2009

The Asian Film Market and the Producers Guild of Korea (PGK) are jointly holding a workshop for five selected local producers. In the end, they will pitch their projects to industry professionals on Oct. 11 at 13:00 ~ 15:00 at the Paradise Hotel in Busan.

KPIF Line-up		
Title	Genre	Producer
<i>Goodbye</i>	Romance/Melodrama	KIM Young-jin
<i>Good Friends</i>	Psychodrama	CHOI Eun-hwa
<i>Nothing To Lose</i>	Film noir	SHIN Chul
<i>Tears Of Father</i>	Horror/Thriller	Jimmy YUN, PARK Dae-hee
<i>Blue Moon</i>	Mystery thriller	KWON Seon-kook

PGK in Busan 2009 International Conference

- The Asian Film Market, the Korean Film Council (KOFIC), and the PGK will jointly open seminars on the "New Methodology of Film Financing" and "International Co-production, Actually" at the Paradise Hotel over two days.
- The financing seminar will feature local and foreign producers discussing new systems that will diversify the current investment environment and how to use them. It will be held Oct. 12 at 13:00 ~ 16:00.
- The co-production seminar will discuss the international treaties and public funds available for co-productions, as well as how to package them. It will be held Oct. 13 at 13:00 ~ 15:00.



Closer to Heaven



Mother



Thirst



A Brand New Life

PUSAN PROMOTION PLAN (PPP) 2009



Creating opportunities for global financing and co-production, PPP showcases established auteurs as well as up-and-coming new talent. This year's Pusan Promotion Plan (PPP) is featuring 30 projects from 21 countries –

projects from established directors such as Japan's Aoyama SHINJI (*Sad Vacation*) and range to those from up-and-coming talent like Indonesia's Edwin (*Blind Pig Who Wants to Fly*). Launched in 1998 at the 3rd Pusan International Film Festival, the PPP has been introducing Asian filmmakers and their projects to global opportunities for funding

and co-production ever since. Starting in 2006, the PPP also opened up to non-Asian projects, and this year's line-up has selections from the US, France, Germany, and Egypt. (See complete list below.) Korean participants include BONG Joon-ho (*Mother*) with his upcoming *Le Transperceneige*, a project based on a French graphic novel. The film is to be produced by another well-known auteur, PARK Chan-wook (*Thirst*). Also from Korea, LEE Myung-Se (*Duelist*) is presenting *Reckless*, the story of legendary Japanese swordsman Miyamoto Musashi. They will be joined by HUR Jin-ho (*One Fine Day, April Snow*), SON Jae-gon (*My Scary Girl*), HAN Jae-rim (*Rules Of Dating, The Show Must Go On*) and winner of last year's PIFF New Currents Award, ROH Gyeong-tae (*Land of Scarecrows*). Projects that are already set as co-productions include the omnibus film produced by JEON Soo-il (*With the Girl of Black Soil*), Ounie LECOMTE (*A Brand New Life*) and Eric KHOO (*My Magic*). JIN Guang-hao, a native of China's Yanbian who won the 2007 New Currents Award, is also collaborating with Korean producer KO Young-jae, of the documentary sleeper hit *Old Partner*. From overseas, other well-known directors such as Hong Kong's PANG Ho Cheung (*Isabella*), Taiwan's CHANG Tso Chi (*How Are You, Dad?*), Thailand's Ekachai UEKRONGTHAM (*The Coffin*) and India's PAN Nalin (*Samsara*) will be revealing their latest projects. Younger emerging filmmakers include Malaysia's TAN Chui Mui, whose *Love Conquers All* was awarded at Rotterdam and PIFF; and Roya SADAT, a previous member of PIFF's Asian Film Academy (AFA) and known as Afghanistan's first serial drama producer. Under the umbrella of the Asian Film Market since 2006, PPP this year will run concurrently Oct. 11 ~ 14 at Haeundae's Seacloud Hotel in Busan.📍

Q&A Nam Dong-chul, General Manager of the Asian Film Market

A founding member and later former Editor-in-chief of Korea's leading film weekly *Cine21*, NAM Dong-chul was named General Manager of the Asian Film Market last November. A cinephile who majored in Economics, he has covered the Korean film industry since 1994, watching it go from dubious dark horse to a major international player. NAM talks with Korean Cinema Today's Jean NOH about the changes he has seen and how he envisions the Asian Film Market. **Q. What has changed the most since you first started working in the Korean film industry?** Now that I think of it, we would write about how “Korean films are facing a crisis” probably every year since 1995. But in the end, Korean films really went through a version upgrade in the late '90s to early '00s. And now we're facing a different kind of crisis. Back when I first started working, Korean films would have a market share of 20% or so. These days, the market share is around 60%, and if it goes down in a bad way, it's around 40 – 50%. The situation has changed since then. Also, the social perception about people working in the industry has gone from negative to positive - according to the status of the film industry itself in Korea. **Q. What kind of market are you positioning Asian Film Market to be?** PIFF is in its 14th year, but the Market is only in its fourth. I've been brought in to invigorate the market, but I think it's necessary to acknowledge that it's still at a very basic level as yet. The thing to do right now is invest boldly. You have to give people more benefits, otherwise it will be hard to survive. This year, we gave early bird registration discounts and complimentary accomodations to exhibitors that take sales offices. We have moved the PPP from the Paradise to the Seacloud so that the sales



Photo by KIM Saon-tae

and projects markets will be together in one place and people can conduct their meetings more conveniently. In Asia, the annual markets in Hong Kong and Tokyo are older and encompass TV and other content. But Pusan definitely has enough potential because the Pusan Film Festival is known as a forerunner in discovering Asian films. There are many film industry professionals who are friendly towards Pusan and naturally would like to do business here. It's a matter of building upon all this. In the end, we would like to become the most important market in Asia. We have a lot of things to tackle before that can

happen, a lot of difficulties to face and tasks to solve. But Busan City is also aiming to become the center for Asian audiovisual industries, and so we are also working with a larger blueprint. **Q. What are you most looking forward to at this market?** The European Audiovisual Entrepreneurs (EAVE) program and the Korean Producers In Focus (KPIF) workshop. Pusan should play a role in bringing together producers from Europe and Asia, and the Mini EAVE event will be part of doing just that. The KPIF should help open up the industry to young producers in a time when funding is difficult.📍

FOR A FILM CULTURE THAT COMMUNICATES

Pusan International Film Festival World Programmer JEON Chan-il

By HAN Sunhee

He was reading the new Haruki MURAKAMI novel *1Q84* when we met for our interview. In fact, JEON Chan-il probably has no time to read any novels these days. He is in charge of programming at Pusan International Film Festival (PIFF), screen recipients of KOFIC English subtitle support program, write introduction for director JEON Soo-il's new movie *I Came from Busan* that's invited to San Sebastian Film Festival and prepare university lectures. "It's impossible to read anything if I am stuck at my desk with my work. But I try to read whenever I can like now. I am fatally attracted to such Haruki novels."

The first time JEON Chan-il made his ties with PIFF was in 2002 when he participated as the program coordinator for Critic's Choice. As the Flash Forward section was newly introduced in 2007, JEON became involved in its programming and after a year of rest he has returned once again to PIFF this year, this time as a programmer. While focusing on selecting invitation works for Flash Forward section, he is also playing the supporting role in selecting films for the World Cinema program. Flash Forward has morphed into a new competition section for finding new non-Asian directors from this year on, and thus his responsibility is heavier than ever. This year's Flash Forward section shows a trend of selecting films that are not quite 'well-made' but of relatively good quality with certain possibilities. "I have put together films that are slightly rough but future-oriented and have possibilities. Different films were invited from different countries, and not just from Western Europe and America which are the majority in film

industry. I can't say every film in this section is the best or favorable to everyone, but I can assure you they're all made of quality."

Among Korean film critics, JEON Chan-il probably has most frequently attended the Cannes Film Festival. For 12 years since 1997, when May comes around he headed for Cannes with just one year

"Through the film festival I hope to put in all my energy to establish international human network."



missed. Sometimes he was able to receive funding for the trip, but if not he was willing to pay out his own pocket to go. "Actually I first went there to get some experience but at the time things were awful compared to its preceding fame. I could not believe this was the world renowned Cannes. I went again to confirm that fame, and as time went by I came to understand why Cannes is so important. It is like walking through the center of world's film history. I could finally realize that films of the world are controlled by Cannes Festival. It is probably possible to write world film history

again with Cannes as one frame."

As a kind of film researcher, JEON Chan-il's biggest goal is to put together Korean film studies in the context of world film history. "Conventional Korean film studies had been conducted without preliminary study on world film history. But I intend to write Korean film history by mobilizing attractions within the frame of history of 'world cinema'. This is my ultimate goal that will take more than 10 years to complete. So recently I am studying other fields like psychology, philosophy and aesthetics. This is a process of accumulating knowledge before I dig into the specific category of 'national cinema' within the general story of 'world cinema'."

Films JEON is particularly interested in are from Germany, Spain and Eastern Europe. Above all he focuses on the common features between these films and Korean films. Firstly he emphasizes we should not forget effects New German Cinema had on Korean films. "We cannot betray New German Cinema. Korean cinema we have now have been formulated based on the cinephile culture that emerged in the late 1970s, and its core had been Nouvelle Vague and New German Cinema. Although New German Cinema failed to communicate with the public, in a way that it has maintained experimentalism and spirits of challenge, it can be said that German cinema today was built on top of New German Cinema foundation." JEON defines Tom TYKWER's *Run Lola Run* as the beginning of modern German cinema and *The Lives of Others* as its peak, and say German cinema is an 'intermediate cinema' where popularity and art come together.

Then he adds Korean films too have features of such 'intermediate cinema'. In other words, modern Korean films embrace both professional artistry and popular commercialism and such flexibility and energy are the power maintaining Korean cinema. As for Spanish films' attractiveness, once again JEON Chan-il talks of communication between person and person, and the drama of relationships. Including the works of Pedro ALMODÓVAR, dramas in many Spanish films seem to be contingency happening excessively, but underneath stands out the interconnectedness among elaborately involved characters. "In the book *Cultural Grammar of the Koreans* I had read Koreans explain everything with 'relationships'. It is true. There never had been true individualism in Korean society. Collective consciousness based on individuality or personality is rather more important. Korean films reflect such sides and they can be found in Spanish films too."

Furthermore, JEON has shown much interest in East European films. Especially he notes how recent Romanian movies have the senses to delicately observe the reality and have them expressed into fables. While Korean movies interpret tragedy of reality as 'han' (grief), Romanian films sublimate it into humor. Hungarian films, too, need more research, as Hungary shows the most similar traits to Koreans amongst all Eastern European countries. Like the case of films made by Gyorgy PÁLFI, who directed *Am Not your Friend*, to be shown in this year's World Cinema section, films with unique narratives and refreshing presentations are being made in Hungary.

In the future, JEON wishes to create film culture as communication which he stresses at all times through PIFF as well.

"PIFF is an organization that plays an important role in the culture and society of this country called Korea. Thus it has to be for the good and benefit of the public. Through the film festival I hope to put in all my energy to establish international human network. Also I will pay much attention to make this festival an important field for discourse, criticism and research on films." ㉠



Photo by KIM Seon-tae

FESTIVAL BLUES: FROM SEOUL TO VANCOUVER

Vancouver International Film Festival, held on September every year, has constantly focused on Asian films including Korean films through Dragons & Tigers award. As a long dedicated programmer of the festival, Tony RAYNS sent us an adorable comment on Korean films invited to the festival this year.

BY Tony RAYNS



Korean movie ads – unique in the world, I think – often list ‘Hot Issues’ raised by the films they’re advertising, obviously believing that an

appeal to the viewer’s appetite for debate and controversy makes a significant contribution to selling the film. The editor has asked me to write about my work as programmer of East Asian films for the Vancouver International Film Festival in Canada, and to explain my Korean selections this year. But let’s start by discussing some of the ‘Hot Issues’ affecting film festivals all over the world in 2009.

You don’t need a degree in Arts Administration to figure out that film festivals are in trouble. The dire financial climate is taking a heavy toll: funding from governments and local authorities is being cut back, sponsorship deals are increasingly elusive, and costs are rising. At the same time, there’s an amazing proliferation of festivals around the world. The attitudes and behaviour of the old-established and relatively well-funded festivals seems to have sparked the creation of countless smaller, grass-roots festivals, as if filmmakers and audiences had conspired to create the festivals they actually need and like rather than the festivals the business wants to foist on them.

The ‘villains’ here are those festivals which seem to have forgotten their founding



Mother

principles and have ‘sold themselves out’ to business interests. The ostensible reason festivals were founded in the first place was to celebrate and encourage the ‘art’ of film. That ideal has often been tarnished over the years, especially by politics, but it’s broadly true that in the days when film was the world’s leading mass medium festivals saw themselves as promoters of excellence, giving space to the kinds of film that weren’t targeted at the biggest possible mass audience. Since the 1980s, though, almost all of the bigger festivals have become more and more responsive to the needs of the film industry, hosting huge film markets and allowing themselves to be used to promote

upcoming commercial releases. I think the recent proliferation of small, local festivals reflects the fact that independent filmmakers and their audiences feel increasingly ‘left out’ of the big events.

When I began programming East Asian films for Vancouver 20 years ago, I set out to assert the interest of the huge cultural shift that was in progress. Japan had seen the rise of a new generation of self-taught independent directors, working outside the film industry. Chinese cinema had seen a succession of ‘new waves’, first in Hong Kong, then in Taiwan and finally in mainland China itself, which had effectively forced most established directors into

retirement. And Korea, I had discovered in 1988, had a large ‘underground film’ movement, much of it explicitly attacking the military government of the time, and also had such directors as JANG Sun-woo and PARK Kwang-su who were infiltrating the Chungmuro film industry and trying to make socially critical and artistically credible films. All of this struck me as significant for world cinema, and more people needed to know about it.

Why did Vancouver want East Asian films in its programme? Partly because festival



Like You Know It All

director Alan FRANEY shared my perception that interesting things were happening in the region’s film cultures. But also, I’m sure, because the city itself was becoming more and more East Asian. Vancouver had become a magnet for Hong Kong Chinese who wanted to get good passports before China would reclaim the territory in 1997, and the city was already full of Chinese immigrants and businesses. And with the Chinese came other East Asians: Japanese, Filipinos, Thais, Vietnamese, Indonesians. Not that many Koreans at first, although when HONG Sangsoo won the festival’s Dragons and Tigers Award in 1996 (with his debut feature *The Day a Pig Fell into the*

Well) he had no trouble in finding a Korean karaoke bar where he could celebrate. The very mixed Vancouver audience soon enough got used to the idea of watching films from cultures they weren’t so familiar with, and the festival’s East Asian section – dubbed “Dragons and Tigers” in response to all the talk of the coming “Pacific Century” – became as popular as any other section of the programme.

From the start, my aim was to represent the widest possible range of filmmaking in the programme: not only mainstream

good platform for this project. It was the third largest film festival in North America (measured in terms of the number of films screened and the number of tickets sold) and it attracted quite a few serious-minded critics and programmers from other festivals. It was not, however, a ‘business’ festival; since its focus was cultural rather than commercial, not many distributors attended and few distribution deals were done. So I tried to make sure that the films and filmmakers I brought to the festival got other benefits from being there, such as a selection of good press reviews and onward invitations to other festivals. And when Alan Franey suggested launching a small juried competition for new directors, I agreed to do it only when it was clear that there would be a cash prize for the winning director: the most tangible ‘benefit’ of all for young filmmakers.

Needless to say, times have changed. No self-respecting festival of any size fails to include East Asian films in its programme these days, and many send programmers out to look for ‘discoveries’ in the region. Many festivals have followed Rotterdam’s example by launching project markets to help filmmakers find co-production finance, and all of them welcome directors from East Asia. And filmmakers’ attitudes have changed too. In recent years I’ve met plenty of young directors who started thinking about their festival premiere before they’d even started shooting the film. But that’s not the end to the changes. While all this has been happening, the global market for non-English-language cinema has been shrinking. Nearly all big-budget commercial films these days are made with global distribution prearranged, either through pre-sales or through output deals between distributors. Smaller, independently made films have a very small chance of getting



distribution, especially if they are not in English. Few independent distributors are willing to take the financial risks, and television stations everywhere have stopped buying. For all too many films, these changed circumstances mean that festival screenings may be the only ‘distribution’ they get.

This is the context in which I had to choose Korean films for this year’s festival in Vancouver. I picked six features, two of them low-budget indies from first-time directors, one medium-length film and 11 short films. Nine of the shorts are vintage graduation films made at the Korean Academy of Film Arts, which celebrates its 25th birthday this year. We’ve shown five of these film before in Vancouver in the years when they were made, but we wanted to mark KAFA’s anniversary and the best way to do it (given our constraints of space and budget) was to present a ‘Greatest Hits’ package, featuring work from such directors as BONG Joon-ho, KIM Eui-seok and Jane SHIN. In the catalogue, I’ve called it “probably the single best programme of shorts we’ve ever screened”. And even if some viewers have seen some of the films before, “like all classics, they sure bear repeating”.

The feature-film choices lead off with two of 2009’s big successes, BONG Joon-ho’s *Mother* and YANG Ik-june’s *Breathless*. BONG Joon-ho is a Vancouver favourite; he first came to the festival in 1994 with his graduation film *Incoherence* (I programmed it with JANG Sun-woo’s *To You, From Me*, another scabrous social satire) and he’s been back twice since then. *Mother* will surely go down as well as his other films have done; western audiences may not pick up all of the Korean references in BONG’s films, but they respond very warmly to his sardonic humour, his departures from genre conventions and his keen sense of the spaces between social intercourse, sexual intercourse and deep affection. *Breathless*, the only film on my list which already has Canadian distribution in place, finesses a trick that the great Hollywood director Howard HAWKS made famous. HAWKS took “the most insolent man on screen” (Humphrey BOGART) and



Chang-Su Gets the Job



His Truth Is Marching On



Incoherence

trumped him with an even more insolent woman (Lauren BACALL). YANG Ik-june casts himself as the meanest and most foul-mouthed thug in recent cinema and locks the character into a stand-off with an amazingly resilient high-school girl (KIM Kkot-bi, also excellent) who consistently gives as good as she gets. The film has no very original ideas about dysfunctional families or the roots of violence in everyday life, and it veers towards melodrama when it tries to deal with those issues. But it gives enormous pleasure in the way it dramatises the edgy central relationship between two

damaged people who have given themselves hard outer shells to conceal the hurt inside, and it gives great parts to everyone in the cast.

Alongside these two palpable hits are two creative successes which clearly need a little more help in finding their audience. HONG Sangsoo’s *Like You Know It All* doesn’t exactly break new ground (its picture of male inadequacy and female uncertainty is familiar from his earlier films, as is the structuring play with repetition and variation) but HONG is a good example of a filmmaker who knows his audience and tailors his scripts – and budgets – to match. The challenge for anyone who supports this most urbane and sophisticated of Korean directors is to convince a wider audience that

his comedies of social embarrassment are for them. LEE Hey-jun’s *Castaway on the Moon* is a more obviously market-driven rom-com, but one with plenty of fresh ideas and images; its hero, a bankrupted victim of the recession, is washed up on an uninhabited island in the Hangang (River) when he tries to commit suicide, and LEE’s script treats him like a cross between Robinson Crusoe and the characters in JG BALLARD’s novel ‘Concrete Island’. The film’s neatest idea is to have its screwed-up hero and heroine become obsessed with each other at a distance of about half a mile.

The two features we have in competition this year are both indie films with unusual strengths, and both will undoubtedly attract attention outside the indie sector. Ex-cinematographer JANG Kun-jae’s *Eighteen* may be autobiographical in inspiration, but anyone who ever went through an illicit high-school romance will recognize this picture of teenage obsession and petulance confronting parental anger and confusion. And cinephiles will be impressed by the film’s exceptionally beautiful mise en scene. KIM Ji-hyun’s *Cats*, made for the feminist group Unni-Network, was intended less as a contribution to Korean film culture than as a discussion of some of the main issues – sexual, marital, psychological and related to questions of fertility – of interest to

young Korean women. It crosscuts between three protagonists (a young woman who doesn’t want to marry, a lesbian with doubts about her girlfriend’s fidelity and a middle-aged woman who wants a child but can’t find a viable sperm donor) to produce the most refreshingly frank and uncomplicated account of the complications of women’s lives since *Go Fish*. It has likeably naturalistic performances and is very smartly shot and cut, which means that it also has real cinematic qualities.

SON Kwang-ju’s short *Re-Search* offers a wry commentary on academic life: a woman degree student struggles to motivate herself to work on her thesis, painfully aware that no-one will ever read it. SON stylises her



Breathless

Don’t Step Out of the House expertly balances humour and menace, suggestion and speculation, banality and violence.

visuals quite brilliantly: the film plays out in an all-white room, the visual equivalent of a blank page. The other short, *Debris*, was made a graduation project at the Korea National University of the Arts by three students who’ve given themselves the collective name “No. 474”. (They are KIM Yong-min, LEE Han-beet and CHOI Bong-jun.) Making very skilful use of CGI, it’s set on a refueling station in space in 2086, crewed by a solitary dreamer, a lonely young heterosexual; the underlying joke is that his life closely resembles a student’s life in 2009. And the 43-minute featurette is the best



Don't Step Out of the House

of this year’s graduation projects from KAFA: JO Sung-hee’s *Don’t Step Out of the House*. Two children have not left their basement home since a call from their father told them to stay in and admit no-one. Something very extraordinary has happened in the world outside, and there are three strange men at their door, begging to be let in ... If the late playwright Harold PINTER had written sci-fi, it might well have turned out like this. The film expertly balances humour and menace, suggestion and speculation, banality and violence. I’m confident that this selection is a fair

reflection of the range of filmmaking in Korea today, and its overall level of quality compares well with any other national cinema represented in the programme. How will the films benefit from being screened in Vancouver? We can’t promise distribution deals, but we can guarantee a high level of engagement from our audience and a lot of valuable networking in and around the festival. Hopefully, too, some useful press comment and internet blogging to help promote the films to a wider, worldwide audience. In these difficult times, that may be the best any festival can offer.🍿

DISCOVERING HER DEPTH

NAM Sang-mi
of *Possessed*

By JUNG Jee-won

NAM Sang-mi is maturing. She has been growing ever since she became known as the 'most beautiful actress'. *Possessed* allowed NAM to reach a higher ground.

NAM hasn't left a strong impression on screen so far. She hasn't reached stardom even though she has starred in several high-profile movies including *Spy Girl*, *She's on Duty*, and *Never to Lose*. But this time it's different. *Possessed* made NAM shine. She showed her best performance in her career and it showed her distinctiveness.

Possessed is LEE Yong-ju's debut film and the legacy of the late producer JUNG Seung-hye of Achim Pictures, who passed away in May. It is already reputed as a thoroughly well-made horror film. Director LEE says, "I would like to make a story that is scary in itself, not to put my effort to make a story scary." NAM plays Hee-jin, a girl who looks for her lost sister.

Cheerfulness and liveliness are the traits she is known for. She has mainly played active and cute roles. She hasn't had any chances to show her depth or portray a darker tone. "During a break after wrapping a TV drama, I read the script of *Possessed*.

Then I really wanted to play Hee-jin, a character who has a sharp image. I haven't played that kind of role before." So she planned to have a meeting with the staff right away. She never wanted to give this character to any other actresses.

NAM Sang-mi is very enthusiastic about acting. She mostly cares about the character, not the genre. "I didn't want to avoid nor pursue horror film. I just meet my own character and live its life. Rest is up to the director and production staff." Nevertheless, it was not easy to get into such a dark character. "I was a little worried about being so different from the image I used to maintain. Most of all, I was afraid that this character might not suit me at all. I really tried hard so that Hee-jin came out of my own heart."

When she meets the character that moves her mind, she doesn't try to define or imagine too much of it. She opens her mind in order to be flexible according to a particular scene. She developed this know-how over the course of six films and TV series and various broadcasts. Especially this time, her attitude has changed. "Before, I was so exhausted since I used to give

myself up entirely to a certain scene. But this time was different. I was enjoying being with the crew. I could concentrate in front of the camera even when I was having fun." When the set is in a good mood, it is natural to raise the film's quality. She didn't even experience such emptiness that she used to feel whenever the shooting was over. She enjoyed some memorable time with the crew after finishing it, too. It is because of the good mood, but it is a sign of her maturity as well. The generosity is expressed on the outside of her, too. She looked so stable during the whole interview and photo shoot. She is that kind of a person who can make people feel comforted. But she became even more generous. Though she gained popularity by using her beautiful facade, she has only been in acting field, not anywhere else. Now she is highly anticipating new characters she will meet in the future. "I am not the most beautiful actress out there (laughs). Right now I am on the way to becoming a real actor. I would like to be an actress who could give credibility as an actress. I want to hear from the people say 'This role is what NAM can do.'" And now, she is beginning to discover her own depth. ●



MOVIEWEEK

A STAR WHO EVOLVES IS BEAUTIFUL

SO Ji-sub of *Sophie's Revenge*

By JUNG Jee-won

SO Ji-sub has changed. He has abandoned his old image and gone is his somberness, and he has returned with a lighter character. Instead of thick masculine scent, he has become closer to light summer cologne. In *Sophie's Revenge*, the collaboration film between Korea and China, SO Ji-sub has transformed into a lovable playboy.

As an actor, it is a major turnaround for SO Ji-sub as well. With lean arms and legs and an radiant smile, he was an actor who can be defined with few simple words like 'attractive'. The role he was accustomed to has been high profile and masculine, but this time he puts on a humble face and absentmindedly bangs his head on the wall. Yet this new SO Ji-sub is not so awkward, because it is a token of confident transformation and not something that is forced out of him.

Leaving out the sitcom he starred in early stages, *Sophie's Revenge* is the first comedy film for SO. The film takes after Hollywood's romantic comedy structure that we are all familiar with. In it SO plays a successful surgeon Jeff who dumps ZHANG Ziyi for FAN Bingbing. "Frankly at first I did not know my character was a funny one. In the process of shooting, the director injected humor to my character as well in order to prevent the film from becoming too serious in any way. I have taken many serious roles before, but I didn't insist on sincere genres

on purpose. I don't have anything against comedies and in fact I would like to try something even crazier."

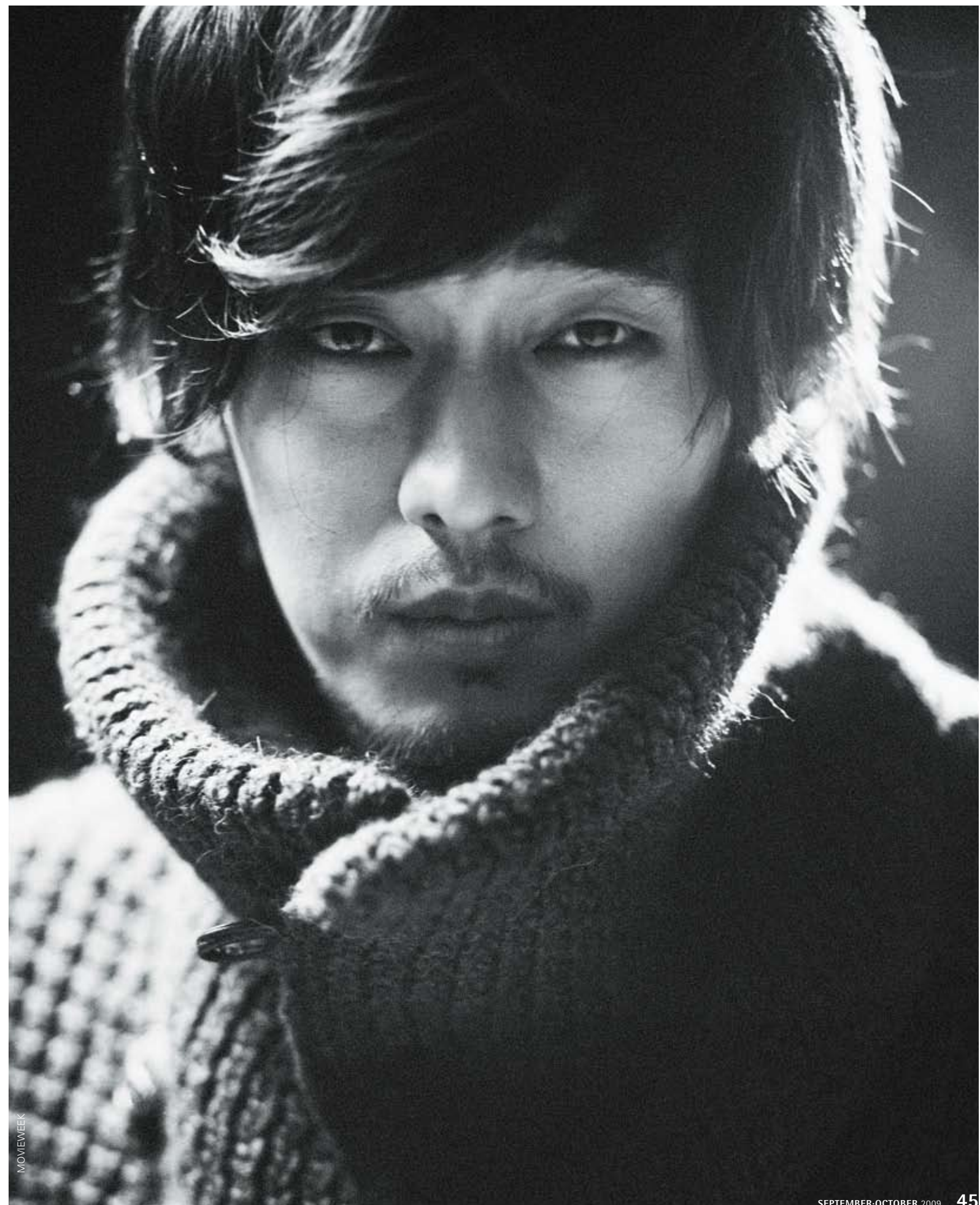
As a student, he grew up soaked from Hong Kong film waves. This is why he was delighted to star in a Chinese film. Working with world star ZHANG Ziyi was an added boon. But to have all the lines spoken in Chinese was not an easy task at all. There wasn't much time to practice and he began to memorize his lines as a whole. "Even so the lines weren't always there in my head during the scene. My entire attention was paid on the lines and sometimes I would think what I am doing here now. Still, seeing the result I am relieved to find out I mixed in pretty well." It took much effort to memorize those lines, as if forgetting what he learned from a cramming session after an exam, all those dialogues are erased completely from his memory. "How was I in the scene? I was an actor without words(laugh)."

This is the second time he has appeared in a foreign production. Previous experience was with *GeGeGe no Kitaro 2*. In the movie he accomplished his role as a goblin, with make-up on his entire face that made him unrecognizable. Weight of the role was insignificant as it's unimaginable to consider him in this manner in Korea. But SO's thoughts were different. "I can't expect to be treated same as I am treated in Korea. Rather I want to try being a great supporting

actor in Korea too. Yet realistically there are many difficulties and it's not easy. There are many Korean actors moving on to international stages lately, and I hope our fans in Korea will give us some time and see how things go." He is serious about working overseas. But instead of trying to secure his position compulsively, he is trying to go with the flow. More than anything, SO Ji-sub is enjoying working in a different environment.

His success with *Rough Cut* became a big burden for SO. Actually it was a film he comfortably participated in, as a warm-up after he was discharged from the military. Unexpected success and positive rating on the quality raised name value of SO beyond expectation. Now many expect the image of *Rough Cut* from him. "I am well aware of that. But I can't make everyone happy. There must be change at some point. I did not start this job with any passion for acting. I came to where I am by chance, and on certain instant things had changed evidently. Now I am full of ambition, wanting to act. My friends who know me say 'How come you are still doing this job?'(laughs)."

That's just it. SO Ji-sub at this moment is full of ambition. He is not afraid to play ugly roles, and has fantasizes about playing a fierce villain in a thriller. He dreams of growing into a true actor and not simply a star known for his 'cool' looks. It is not just a dream but an on-going road. SO Ji-sub is evolving. ●





Moo-myung is a Joseon dynasty headhunter who tracks down fugitives and lives off their rewards. On a mission to kill a catholic priest, he encounters a beautiful noble lady, Ja-young and falls in love with her. A few years later, Ja-young is arranged to become the next queen of Joseon and enters the royal palace. Lovesick Moo-myung becomes the personal guard to the queen in order to be closer to Ja-young. As the queen of a conservative, Confucius nation, Ja-young becomes involved in a political power struggle with Russia and Japan that are trying to colonize Joseon. To protect the dynasty and her country, she confronts with the King's father and other influential foreign diplomats to of no avail. As the Japanese government plots her assassination under implicit agreement with the King's father, who is the real ruler of the nation as regent, Moo-myung must fend off devastating threats from the King's army in order to protect Ja-young from harm.

The story of MIN Ja-young is well known throughout the world with popular TV dramas and Broadway musical. This feature film adaptation switches gears as it focuses on the tragic period love story with action that shares similar roots with *Portrait of Beauty* and *The Frozen Flower*. It re-interprets the real historical characters and puts them together with imagined characters for dramatic effects. *The Sword with No Name* is based on the chivalry novel of the same title by Yasulok. The story takes a different look at MIN Ja-young, not as a strong female politician, but as a lady with sensibility. It will show splendid Joseon Daynasty period when cultural exchange between the East and West was enthusiastic. SU Ae, an actress who is popular for her traditional beauty, and CHO Seung-woo, a versatile actor as well as a musical star, make an attractive duo for this melodrama. This film marks the third feature for the director KIM Yong-kyun following *Wanee & Junnah* and *The Red Shoes*. ❶

The Sword with No Name

Directed by KIM Yong-kyun

Cast CHO Seung-woo, SU Ae

Release Date September 24

International Sales Showbox/Mediaplex, Inc.



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- *YOGA*
- *Detectives in 40 Minutes*
- *Exhausted*



Take Off

Directed by KIM Yong-hwa
Cast HA Jung-woo, SUNG Dong-il, KIM Ji-suk, KIM Dong-wook, CHOI Jae-hwan
Release Date July 29, 2009

By JANG Byung-won

National skiing athlete Bob (HA Jung-woo) was adopted by an American family when he was

young. Hong-chul (KIM Dong-wook) became a waiter after forced out of the ski team due to a drug scandal. Jae-bok (CHOI Jae-hwan) helps his father run the family restaurant business. Chil-gu (KIM Ji-suk) desperately wants to be free from the pressure of military service in order to take care of his grandmother and mentally challenged brother Bong-

gu (LEE Jae-eung). These 5 unlikely characters form a new national ski jump team under the coach BANG Jong-sam (SUNG Dong-il) who used to be a ski teacher for children. They seek a chance to participate in the Winter Olympic games, all with different reasons. But their Olympic hopes prematurely evaporate when the Korea Olympic committee scraps the

plan.

Characters in *Take Off* are sensible losers. They have to overcome what they currently deal with: meeting his biological mother, proving one's existence, exemption from the army, and getting back his fame, etc. KIM Yong-hwa, who previously directed blockbuster *200 Pounds Beauty*, made every effort to fully realize each characters



carefully and realistically. In doing so, the film's running time went over two hours. It cannot but lack the cohesion while all the characters have loads of agony and concerns. Luckily, the film ends on a high point.

Take Off wants to be the best film in its category. Just remember how shabby other films were in terms of excitement and vividness of the game itself, although they used to hold a number of dramatic stories. This film, however, has many scenes which can make you forget about all those 'losses'. It has more joy in the sports match than naïve stories or clumsy patriotism in which characters suddenly bust out national anthem. Above all, KIM Yong-hwa realizes the difference between the match from the TV and the screen.

Success factor of producing sports scenes which has long been a challenge seems to be the choice among various sporting events. *Take Off* has chosen ski jump, which doesn't need any complicated angle shots since it has a simple rule and process. What's more, the film fairly contrasts a rapid speed of reaching the apex of a jump with slow motion during spectacular sight in the air. The ski jump scenes show the inner freedom when characters are soaring out of their individual, perhaps trivial, sorrow.

Haeundae

Directed by JK. YOUN
Cast SUL Kyung-gu, HA Ji-won, PARK Joong-hoon, UHM Jung-hwa
Release Date July 23, 2009

By KIM Bong-suk

JK. YOUN is relatively unknown in overseas market as he has only directed two hits so far; *Sex Is Zero* and *My Boss, My Hero*. These two are somewhat primitive and clichéd, but they have something that audience might like. His most ambitious and blockbuster film to date, *Haeundae*, is so obvious about his strong and weak points. Therefore it is interesting but I feel sorry at the same time. YOUN has so much affection towards his characters, though having vulgar desires, they can be forgiven since they are so innocent. Because his characters are too naive, it leads to childish laughs and tears. Some posh

intelligent figures might feel nauseated, but his characters are mostly lower class citizens or just ordinary everyday people. Such innocent desire and clumsy exaggeration sympathize with the audience. So it could be said that *Haeundae* is a vast superior feature in his filmography. And no doubt, his most successful.

Though popular, it isn't easy to make disaster films well. Natural disasters such as volcano, Tsunami, or earthquake befall so suddenly. Showing spectacular scenes subsequently is impossible while the audience come into the theater mostly wanting to see just that. What more important is the story of the characters who would encounter the disaster? The film should reach the climax of the conflict between characters, and show dramatic process of overcoming the disaster. It is character's panorama which moves audience's heart, not the disaster itself. And *Haeundae* starts from the story

of characters; Yeon-hee, who struggles to live without her father and Man-sik, who's in love with her, and a coast guard Hyeong-sik, who falls in love with a beautiful woman from Seoul... All these characters allow the film to come alive, not the massive tidal wave that devastates their city. Even while portraying shallow comic clichés at times, YOUN's endeavor to keep his own way of storytelling is worthy of praise.

Besides, YOUN showed his talent not only in comedy but in action scenes as well. The scene in which containers fall on to the Gwangan Bridge is most noteworthy. And the way he makes the scene into comedy is incredible. He used to be the one who could strike a balance between comedy and cliché, as he did in *Sex Is Zero* and *My Boss, My Hero*. Though the arrogant *Crazy Assassins* and *Miracle on 1st Street* failed at the box office, *Haeundae* shows most of his strong point.



Possessed

Directed by LEE Yong-joo
Cast NAM Sang-mi, RYU Seung-ryong, SHIM Eun-kyung
Release Date August 12, 2009

By JANG Byung-won

Horror films, which usually aimed at certain period (mostly summer) and don't require blockbuster budget, are above all regarded as the best stage for discovering new talented directors. The reason is the sensation that the horror film itself bears. Since this genre tends to appeal by expressing dramatic emotions, it is said to be easy to get attention from the audience. However, it has been evaluated only to have a limitation, being criticized as largely disposable and ready-made seasonal genre.

Having said all that, *Possessed* feels like a fresh take on tired conventions. Based on sensible script and deliberate production design, this is one of the best Korean horror films in recent memory. It somewhat resembles KIYOSHI Kurosawa's 'anxiously strangling' way of horror. The structure is more like occult while it is rather

based on Korean material: a spiritual medium. Possession of the devil is a typical Western theme, which can be said for religious fanaticism as well. Demonic fanatics, police who deny spiritual beings, and man's selfishness in using supernatural are what Western horror used to deal with. Nothing new, but they are useful in a sense of 'proven code'.

LEE Yong-joo sympathizes every character but at the same time, never misses the evil mind which used to be hidden in each individual. It is the very belief deep within the selfishness of people which makes up the nucleus of this horror story. But ironically, Hee-jin and Su-jin, who are the only exceptions, become means of the evil.

Possessed is worth the praise for making logical plot and showing attention to the reality in space. Japanese films created a trend in which taking daily lives as a material and showing sensational images. But countless imitations only relied on repetition of sensational shock. Not mixed with this unreasonable trend, *Possessed* should be praised for carving out its own path.



A Million

Directed by JOE Mino
Cast PARK Hae-il, PARK Hee-soon, SHIN Mina
Release Date August 6, 2009

By KIM Sukyun

Eight young people are randomly picked to participate in an online reality survivor show. The contestants are flown to a remote Australian island where the show takes place. The rule is simple: survive the game at whatever the cost and the last one standing takes the grand prize of one million dollars. Hundreds and thousands of viewers tune in to watch the show in Korea. This thriller starts with a story told by the winner and the plot is structured in a

series of flashbacks: naturally, the question is "What really happened during the show?" not "who is going to be a winner?" When the first contestant is found dead and the second is murdered right before everyone, the game becomes a battle for their own lives. Even the survivors' efforts to escape from the deadly trap turn out to be carefully orchestrated part of the game. All that they can imagine is to wish others' death, or to kill each other in order to survive and get out alive. Ironically, this life-threatening game of survival provides a thrilling show for those watching it online.

The film plays around with the idea that other people's tragic circumstance is another's entertainment value when

seen from a safe distance through media. This sadistic voyeurism produced by media entertainment, no matter how cruel and vicious, is now commonly observed and even enjoyed. Interesting to note is the fact that the film's message is played out to the audience of this film, as they get certain visceral enjoyment out of watching the fruits of the actors enduring physical and psychological pain during production. Here lies the ironies of this film.



Chaw

Directed by SHIN Jung-won
Cast UHM Tae-woong, JUNG Yu-mi, JANG Hang-sun, YOON Je-moon
Release Date July 15, 2009

By KIM Hye-sun

It's bigger and stronger. In the adventure film *Chaw*, director SHIN Jung-won shows collective struggles of people attempting to catch a wild boar in a rural town, and it has more humor and eccentric drama than his previous film *To Catch a Virgin Ghost*. In a peaceful-looking rural village of Sameri, a mutilated body is found, and the whole village is terrified. Soon more bodies are discovered, and former hunter CHUN Il-man (JANG Hang-sun) realizes after

his granddaughter's death that the culprit is a wild boar, which has mutated and preys on humans. When the mother of demoted policeman KIM (UHM Tae-woong) is thought to be lost, CHUN Il-man organizes a squad, which consists of BYUN Su-ryun (JUNG Yu-mi), who is doing a dissertation about wild boars, famous hunter BAEK (YOON Je-moon), and detective SHIN (PARK Hyuk-kwon).

In fact, whether they catch it or not isn't that important. Though the budget was USD 5.4 million, the film ignores many rules of the genre. There are a lot of actions sequences and characters, which don't seem very relevant or even necessary: detectives tumble down during investigation, and the hunter pretends to sleep being afraid of getting caught when he



tries to kiss a girl from his squad. Or, even a crazy woman often appears so randomly, demanding to be called 'mother'. Nevertheless, strangely, these chaotic scenes create a balance among themselves and display the meanness and dichotomy of human nature. *Chaw*, which seems to deal with a mutated ghost, made by human on the surface, is actually full of black humor and satire.





The Pot

Directed by KIM Tae-gon
Cast LIM Hyung-kuk, YANG Eun-yong, RYU Hyun-bin
Release Date August 20, 2009

By SONG Soon-jin
Hyung-kuk moves to Seoul with his daughter Mi-ae (RYU Hyun-bin) and pregnant wife Young-ae (YANG Eun-yong). He seems to have a bright future as he takes over a factory with the property as part of his inheritance from his parents. But after meeting the PARKs, the investors of the factory as well as Hyung-kuk's neighbor, his family encounters a couple of uneasy matters. The PARKs preach his family to go to church, and the mother of PARK who has Alzheimer's becomes close with Mi-ae, who used to love her own grandmother. Their new life takes a detour when the water pipe in their house suddenly breaks down and ruin their daily life as well. One day Mi-ae has an accident at the funeral ceremony of PARK's mother, and from then on she acts somewhat weird. Eventually, past affair, which they don't want to remember anymore,

comes up when they were driven to the verge. *The Pot* makes horror out of a seemingly happy-looking family and their typical modern housing complex and the neighbor who appeals in the name of church. What *The Pot* features is the deliberate structure dealing with the inside and the outside between which any connection doesn't seem to have, and so that it shows the process of collapse of a family. It is the essence of psycho-horror film. It is motivated by the director's own novel *The Old Man in The Pot* which deals with 'leaving the old person' of these days. In the end, the film symbolizes the downfall of Hyung-kuk's family, but not with temporary 'surprising show'.

The Code of a Duel

Directed by YEO Myung-joon
Cast LEE Sang-hong, YOU Jae-wook, YEO Myung-joon
Release Date August 6, 2009

By KIM Soo-yeon
Literally, *The Code of a Duel* is an independent film dealing with swordsmanship. Martial

arts film is a rare case even in commercial films nowadays, and what's more, the setting is modern day, not historical. YU Young-bin, who is always scorned by his boss, lives a double life. He is an ordinary low-level salary man, but swaggers as the best swordsman as soon as he gets off work. One day he comes by a gym run by his fellow trainer, JIN Woon-gwang, and meets a high school boy CHOI Bon-guk, who was a beloved pupil of JIN. They become close by practicing together, but they confront an unavoidable fate. CHOI, who has been training in order to seek revenge for his father's death but it turns out the person he wants to revenge on is YU Young-bin, whom he used to follow just like a real brother.

YEO Myung-joon, who used to be interested in martial arts films, finally made this feature debut as his tribute. YEO, who wanted to make more realistic and deeper actions after working on *Righteous Battle*, is himself a martial artist, practiced for about 3 years. Feeling himself a weird gap between the real society and the martial arts scene, he drew motivation from his own experience. Neither using CG, stunt doubles nor wires, the film shows sweaty analogue actions from the old days. YEO also plays JIN Woon-gwang, playing duo roles as the director and actor.



Sophie's Revenge

Directed by JIN Yimeng
Cast Ziyi ZHANG, SO Ji-sub
Release Date August 20, 2009

By JUNG Jee-won
Sophie's Revenge can be interpreted into two ways: the phrase that covers both views is 'romantic comedy'. If it is only the 'fun' factor that is derived from the genre that is looked into, this film may seem colorless, even mundane. Narrative and character settings follow that of a typical Hollywood romantic comedies, a formula that has been

replicated countless of times in the past. It is not too difficult to anticipate how the drama will unfold and how it will end. Same ingredient will taste different depending on how it is cooked, but this film's recipe may be too conventional to make it special in anyway. Nevertheless, take a different perspective on the film and the interesting parts of the film will come into view. It must be noted that the film is romantic comedy produced from mainland China. The world set within the movie is in itself a fantasy. The streets are filled with European architecture and the interiors have been

composed of sweet primary colors to compliment the characters' features. There is nothing Chinese about the film. It is like the present day China, opening its doors to usher in the outside world. Again familiar, but the way CG and editing reveal the character's tone are interesting as well. The most notable point is the transformation of Ziyi ZHANG and SO Ji-sub as both actors are attempting their first comedic roles. In a nutshell, *Sophie's Revenge* is common, but well made film that brings out the atmosphere unique to romantic comedies in a skillful manner.

Goodbye Mom

Directed by JUNG Ki-hun
Cast CHOI Kang-hee, KIM Young-ae
Release Date September 10, 2009

By SONG Soon-jin
At a girls' high school at the seaside in Busan, Ae-ja is a problematic girl but is famous for good writings. She dreams to study abroad and be a writer. Her mother Young-hee raised Ae-ja and her brother all by herself over the years but she neglects Ae-ja because she's a daughter. Her brother goes to study abroad alone and Ae-ja is disappointed and leaves for Seoul to be a writer. From then she hardly visits her mother due to piled up resentment. One day, Ae-ja gets a phone call that Young-hee relapsed into cancer and is in hospital again. Ae-ja tries to hand off her mother to her brother but he's to work and prepare for his wedding. For lack of any better alternative, Ae-ja reluctantly takes care of her mother Young-hee.

A sensitive mother and daughter movie Goodbye Mom is directed by a newcomer

JUNG Ki-hun. After 14 years of production crew experience, he put 4 years of effort to write the original script. Director JUNG mentions *Goodbye Mom* as 'a coming of age story of a grown-up woman'. He got ideas from his mother and his elder sister's arguments and built characters by taking elements of his ex-girlfriend and her mother. From hatred to understanding and to love and yearning, the flow of Ae-ja and Young-hee's emotion was caught up from interviews with around 400 mothers and daughters.

Footing on the reality yet fresh settings and dialogues became alive by CHOI Kang-hee who has wide acting spectrum including playing a serial killer, and an innocent high school girl, and KIM Young-ae who is well known for gracious and elegant mother character. By portraying crude Busan dialect, beautiful Busan seaside, Jagalchi fish market and vital and energetic Busan ladies, Goodbye Mom becomes a so-called 'Busan Movie'. The script of Goodbye Mom won the grand prize for screenplay contest held by Busan Film Commission.



Treeless Mountain

Directed by KIM So-young
Cast KIM Hee-youn, KIM Sung-hee
Release Date August 27, 2009



By LEE Hyong-suk

Jin and Bin are poor children without mother. There is neither abusing stepmother nor Daddy Long Legs that usually appear in such stories. The children are not Oliver Twist type either. It is not a melodrama with dramatic sufferings. This is a realistic story of growing children where two girls are denied by the real world. But their blissful faces are shining with glowing smiles.

Father abandons the family and mother suffers from endless burdens of living. Jin and Bin are sent to their aunt's house, but she is an alcoholic and they're once again shipped to their grandparent's house in a rural town. The town is filled with seniors who do not have enough energy to take care of themselves. Two girls' planting a rootless tree in piled sand represents their hopeless patience for their mother's return. Close-ups of their faces resonate the emotions of entire movie and the sceneries of rural areas surrounding Seoul and countryside are cold but attractive reality. By showing ruined past and poor present and lasting future, Director KIM explores the essence of 'gaze'

for the second time. The faces and emotions portrayed by the two children and the ending song will remain with the audience for a long time.

Where the Truth Lies

Directed by HONG Ki-seon
Cast JUNG Jin-young, JANG Keun-suk, OH Kwang-rok, SHIN Seung-hwan
Release Date September 10, 2009



By LEE Hyong-suk

Where the Truth Lies is a thriller based on a real and controversial murder case in Seoul. On the night of April 8, 1997, an innocent college student was brutally murdered in a burger shop washroom for no apparent reason. 2 Korean-American teenagers are brought in for questioning and are charged with murder and possession of lethal weapon and withholding evidence. Neither are remorseful for their heinous crimes and blame each other for the killing. During their trial the court discovers that the perpetrators were high on drugs and the victim was killed for fun and the thrill of killing. While these two teens were charged and sentenced for murder and possession of lethal weapon, they were successfully appealed and were let go. Before the prosecution could take further action, they fled the country before their travel

ban could be extended.

The real case became controversial because the fairness issue of investigation and trial procedures of American criminals in Korea based on SOFA (Status of Forces Agreement) were raised. If the grounds of appeal are taken to heart, one innocent man was brutally slain by nobody. It is an irony since one of the two suspects must have killed him but none of them can be punished. Unlike the real case, diplomatic issues between Korea and the USA are indirectly shown in the movie. Director HONG who used to be the flagman of Korean realist movie movement, again focuses on contradictions and absurdities of Korean society. This is his third feature after two realist movies: *Sorrow, Like a Withdrawn Dagger, Left My Heart*, a story about slave labor in deep-sea fishing vessels, and *The Road Taken*, a story about prisoner of conscience.

Show Me the Money

Directed by CHOI Equan, NAM Da-jeong, KWON Jong-kwan, LEESONG Hee-il, KIM Eun-kyung, YANG Hae-un, Chegy, YOON Seong-ho, KIM Sung-ho, KIM Young-nam
Cast PARK Won-sang, SO You-jin, LIM Won-hee, JO Won-sun, OH Dal-soo CHO Eun-ji, and more
Release Date September 10, 2009





By SONG Soon-jin

Show Me the Money consists of 10 short films tied together by the themes of money and the Korean society, narrated by major Korean directors and actors of the independent cinema. A group of young men go out of business and in despair put on a live suicide show in front of the camera in *Our Last Words, Live*, while high school girls ask the homeless to buy cigarettes for them and a woman reporter tries to make a story out of it in *A Tip for Cigarettes*. A boy collects coins for his secret crush who everyone else bullies on in *Coin Boy*, and *Anxiety* portrays the life of a couple who lose their savings in stocks and even lose their faith on each other, while *Saw* is a story of a young hardware store clerk suffering from nightmares. *Sitcom* compares scenes of shallow capitalist society to a comical drama, *Fastest Man in the World* chases after quiet life of a homeless man, *Neo Liberal Man* tells an ironic story of a lucky man who continues to win the lottery for a year, *Penny Lover* is a story behind a penny, and *Hundred Nails and a Deer Antler* is a story of an unpaid worker who confronts his boss but ends up feeling sorry for him. In *Show Me the Money* various genres such as black comedy, horror, and melodrama come together as one. Cast members like singer CHO Won-sun and progressive critic JIN Joong-kwon who are from outside of the boundaries of film business stand out. Presented to celebrate the 10th Jeonju International Film Festival.



YOGA

Directed by YOON Jae-yeon
Cast Eugene, CHA Soo-yeon, CHO Eun-ji, PARK Han-byul, KIM Hye-na, HWANG Seung-eon
Release Date August 20, 2009

By LEE Hyong-suk

YOGA tells a story of five beautiful women who gather at a yoga academy; a show host (Eugene) who lost her place to her younger colleague, a divorcee whose plastic surgery went wrong (KIM Hye-na), an actress who's no longer popular (PARK Han-byul), a woman who suffers from bulimia and diet compulsion (CHO Eun-ji) and a woman with 'good girl complex'. The yoga academy is a mysterious, secret place promising absolute beauty after a week of concentrated training. However, there are several conditions: prematurely leaving the academy, having a banquet, looking at mirrors and taking showers are all forbidden. Here, one by one the 5 women are faced with a series of bizarre deaths. What is the truth hidden behind this yoga academy? The mystery of these women begins to intertwine with another story of a legendary actress from the

silent film era who lost her fame and love to another actress who came after her.

The movie chooses the subject of women's endless desire for beauty and vanity surging in Korean society instigating plastic surgery and diet. The yoga academy decorated with dark yet gorgeous patterns emit peculiar atmosphere, and the training scene of the women even seem dream-like at times. YOGA entraps beautiful women full of jealousy and ambition and play the game of death and punishment familiar in Korean horror films. Interestingly, not only director YOON Jae-yeon (*Wishing Stairs*), but 3 of the 7 major actresses leading the movie, PARK Han-byul (*Wishing Stairs*), LEE Yeong-jin (*Memento Mori*) and KIM Hye-na (*Into the Mirror*) have debuted or became popular through horror movies.

Detectives in 40 Minutes

Directed by HLEE Sang-yong
Cast YOO Seoun-ho, KANG So-ra
Release Date August 12, 2009

By KIM Sukyun

A dead body is found in a classroom while all the students



are out. A boy, the first witness, and a girl, who first suspected the boy, team up in order to catch the killer within remaining 40 minutes, until the next class is over. The duo are free to move around during the class hour and they find out that all of teachers have secrets. Who is the murderer? And why was the victim killed?

Detectives in 40 minutes tries to combines attractions of high teen school romance with thrills of a detective story. The film follows rules of teen romance; a popular boy teams up with a not very popular, rather, secluded girl as a couple and the girl reveals her attractions and talents as story goes. It is an enjoyable teenage version of *Much Ado About Nothing*, only murder scene at the beginning is quite gory.

Exhausted

Directed by KIM Gok
Cast PARK Ji-hwan, CHANG Ri-u
Release Date September 3, 2009

By JANG Byung-won

Exhausted is bizarre. This movie about destructive relationship between a hooker that wanders around factory zone and the

pimp who rears her makes the audience uncomfortable and squirm. While the story is obscure, scenes shot with super 8mm are dry as dirt, and unbearably cruel images assaults out of nowhere. The strategy *Exhausted* had chosen is clear, by intentionally making the audience uncomfortable through a carefully planned pacing, the movie provokes traditional way of movie watching. Why does the story always have to make sense? Does the screen have to be clear? Questions made about such standards of rating a movie were only natural before, and this movie insists such rules are just all nonsense.

A member of 'Goksa' the unyielding film group along with his twin brother KIM Sun, director KIM Gok experiments with a reorganization of film format that revolts against the traditional discourse and customs of the day. Consistently coarse description of this film sincerely enlightens us of how false movie watching had been until now, a show put on under a calm stable state of being so that our eyes become vainly accustomed and our critical minds failing to function in any way. Such aggressive approach made the movie the hottest issue among recent independent films.🔪



THE SPIRITUAL GURU OF KOREAN FILMS, KIM KI-YOUNG

The series of introducing masters who have greatly influenced Korean film history. Through his works that intensively dive into the human mindset, the article surveys director KIM Ki-young who even influenced recent Korean directors greatly.



Director KIM Ki-young (1922~1998)

By KIM Young-jin

Last days of late KIM Ki-young were dramatic. In 1997, events looking back at his works continued and peaked with his retrospective program during 2nd Pusan International Film Festival. All through the festival whenever he was spotted walking along the streets of Pusan young students approached him for his autograph. At the audience QA session held after the screening, he made many people laugh with his unexpected witty answers. For instance, when an audience member asked him the meaning of grotesque scenes in the film, he would answer bluntly "because I am a pervert". When greeted with phrases like 'Mr. Director', 'You are a star here', 'You must feel great' during the festival, he would reply with his trademark big laugh and answered "What are you talking about? I'm just starting out. I'll really make a good new movie soon. This time it will be the best. You must write reviews for me when the time comes."

Physicalizing of Art

On February 5, 1998 when attention from in and out of the country was hitting its fever pitch, KIM faced an abrupt death with his wife when electrical fire broke out at his house. Right before his death he was invited to his retrospect show in Berlin Film Festival, but delayed his departure insisting that he wanted to leave with his wife, which led to his tragic death. To KIM, his wife was a life-long companion and the most avid supporter. As a classmate of Seoul National University's medical school, his wife opened a dentist clinic after graduation, and it is known that she encouraged her husband to pursue a career in film by saying, "I will make money, you should create art." Born in Seoul, 1922 (official records say he is born in 1919 but in interviews he insisted on 1922), KIM Ki-young was from an intellectual family and even though he was talented in art, he was shocked by his Japanese teacher when he warned KIM that he would only end up as an elementary teacher during the Japanese occupation period. He soon threw out his brushes and concentrated on studying and applied to



The Housemaid

Severance medical school in Seoul. However, as a Korean he failed due to the unfair entrance exam system and had to sail over to Japan to continue his studies. That was when he was first exposed to the charms of modern culture including the world of cinema. At the time KIM Ki-young not only indulged in films but also visited Tsukiji Theater where leftist plays were often shown, attending lectures of OSHINAWA Kaoru who returned from Moscow. According to his own words, he "had 'physicalized' art as it went beyond everyday life."

After Korea was liberated he returned home and entered Seoul National University's medical school. There he became a legend in the drama club. As the leader of the school's drama club, he had put on stage Henry Ibsen's 'Ghosts' as well as 'Merchant of Venice' and 'Dark Road' (an adaptation of Chekhov's 'On the Road'). 'Ghosts' was praised by LEE Hae-rang, one of the most renowned Korean theaters experts, as the "best play in Korea". KIM Ki-young's career that almost stayed in the theaters changed its course to films when Korean War broke out in 1950. During the war, KIM Ki-young produced Daehan news in order to make a living, and was commissioned by American Public Affairs section to make *Liberty News* and from this experience he was able to use facilities of the organization

to shoot *The Box of Death*. After quitting the job at the embassy he returned to Seoul and became true 'director KIM Ki-young' when he shot *Yang san Province*. Made from a screenplay written in just three days, *Yang san Province* was a story of a couple whose love fails to come true because of high class noble coming between them. There is a scene that gives some idea of KIM Ki-young-style fantasy. According to KIM's recollection, the last scene showed the couple lying dead in the tomb, but the spirits have sex and rise to the sky (this scene is not included in the restored DVD version because its negative film is lost).

According to film historian LEE Young-il, KIM Ki-young's films can be divided into three categories: entertainment films, realism films and films that look into human instincts. More than anything, KIM was a successful director of his time. Along with *The First Snow* (1958) through which actress KIM Ji-mee made her debut, *A Defiance of Teenager* (1959), *The Housemaid* (1960), *The Sea Knows* (1961), *Goryeojang* (1962) were all big news of their time. "If you look over all of my films, one out of three was a success. I did not do 'art', I just had fun to fit my taste. That was how I put in sex scenes and many came to see my movie." Throughout 1950s and 1960s, KIM Ki-young shuttled between

realism films of neo-realism line, commercial films and suspense thrillers and made films of his own color that brought out the other side of the situation like paranoia. Nevertheless KIM's most important work is of course the *Housemaid* series that picks on condition of humans with horribly chilling surrealistic methods. The *Housemaid* series dealt with the story of a man and his family that falls apart due to a woman. It includes *Woman of Fire* (1971), *Chungnyeo* (1972), *Woman of Fire 82* (1982) and *Carnivorous Animal* (1984).

The *Housemaid* Series, a Marvelous Cave of Unconsciousness

Black and white film *The Housemaid* shows impressive camera movement and sound processing, and the power of drama in *Woman of Fire* and *Woman of Fire 82* are derived from deep depth and colors but the intention of story stems from the same root. The economic incapability of the man in *Housemaid* series is connected to his sexual incompetence, and expressing in a Freudian way he is the head of the family who remained in his degradation stage, refusing to leave the body of the mother. Men in KIM Ki-young's films, who are lost and failing to adapt to the modernized society, are punished by women but while feeling attracted and scared by them at the same time, the men desire return to the uterus. That is only possible through death. Adding here the class conflict of Korean society in 1960s and 1970s, Korean version of Oedipus suicide show the *Housemaid* series is changed from psychological drama into a social drama.



At present day, KIM Ki-young is a rare spiritual leader to those directors who are leading the modern Korean films, so-called ‘generation without mentors’.

Director KIM himself would belittle the movie as just another boring film, but the *Housemaid* series is an outstanding, marvelous cave of unconsciousness. In *The Housemaid* the first of the series, the interior of the middle class house is divided into two floors and suspense is created with different meanings each time

different character goes up the stairs. Such direction skill of KIM Ki-young is a model example of modern film technique that shows everything with just characters' actions and not with words or plots.

A showman and an artist, after KIM Ki-young succeed with *Woman of Fire* and *Chungnyeo*, his career began to shake as President PARK Chung-hee launched his military regime aiming for permanent reign since 1972. Laws on films underwent changes and about 20 film companies were forced to merge into one studio. Film industry was rearranged into oligopoly and there was no room for producer/director KIM Ki-young. KIM had to make films produced by another studio and only work as a director. It was an era where government encouraged production of literary art films (films that are made from famous novels). Foreign film import was limited to 20 films a year and rights of film import was granted to those who received awards for literary arts films. KIM Ki-young's films made during 1970s are mostly one of these art films. Even when it is an elegant literature that's made into a film, with KIM Ki-young as its director the film is always stained with atmosphere unique to KIM. "In the '70s Korean films were made by film companies to import foreign ones, it was just a cover up. Then they would ask themselves who can make films cheapest and fastest? It's KIM Ki-young! That's how things went." Literary art films made by KIM during this period are *I-eoh Island* (1977, adapted from LEE Cheong-jun's novel) and *Earth* (1978, LEE Gwangsu) had nothing to do with the original novels. "If more than a third of the



Earth

original story is contained in the film, then it is a failure. That's not a movie. I have always kept this principle." *I-eoh Island* makes one think of Marcel Proust's *In Search of Lost Time* with its complicated time structure, telling the story of people in search of legendary island I-eoh Island. The continuing strange charm on screen that thickly surrounds the body is only possible by KIM Ki-young, and the overwhelming image of the ocean is particularly impressive. The sea was zoomed in to the maximum with a 500mm telescopic lens and it is as if the massive water is rising up, and the horizontal screen transforms vertically, creating an illusion of being sucked into the screen itself.

“Scientist, not Artist”

KIM Ki-young was famous for not showing his scripts to anyone on the set. He would hide it between his hands, glimpse at it only to give directions. At PIFF retrospective show, actress PARK Jung-ja who played shaman in *I-eoh Island* had recollected those days, "His way of directing was very peculiar. There was a scene where my character had to perform several rituals, and I was so nervous that my lips went dry and he would say nothing to me. Just before the shooting he came over and whispered, 'You see, this is done like you are engaging in a sexual intercourse. Understand?' Listening to his low-tone voice I was stirred all over and acted like a possessed person. There would be no other sex as intense as that moment."

The art and impulse of KIM Ki-young had been plunging to all sides and even as it went through the ups and downs of the '70s and



A Woman After a Killer Butterfly

'80s it was never fully completed. More than anything, environment surrounding Korean film industry was not fertile enough to support his movies. His 1978 film *A Woman After a Killer Butterfly* is consisted of three episodes, 'Victory of Will', 'Reincarnation of the Beauty', 'Killer Butterfly'. It was an interesting example of low-budget film expressing obsession of death in the language of horror films like extraordinary situations where someone who should be killed returns as skeletons insisting he is not dead, or a woman of Goryeo era reincarnates. However, KIM Ki-young declared it as a 'worthless movie that needs no consideration whatsoever.' In fact he could not remember this film being praised among young audiences as a true cult movie, although there is no knowing whether it was intentional lapse of memory.)

Late HA Gil-jong was the only filmmaker who was both a creative director and a critic at the same time. He was a passionate admirer of his colleague, "In KIM's movies conventional plot exists but only the situation revealing human minds stands there. He is obsessed in human mindset with very experimental attitude and paranoia. KIM Ki-young has always exaggerated a segment of the Korean society, but there is no need to ask whether the story is plausible or not. If it is not, that would mean he is seeing the Korean society of the time from his own perspective." KIM Ki-young had considered himself a scientist and not an artis, "I am a scientist who majored in medicine. That made me close to a technician. Once I saw these female workers wrapping cigarettes



Goryeojang

and they always picked up 10 at a time. In a way humans are more accurate than machines. Of course beneath everything lies the power of practice. There is not one movie I had made thinking of 'art'. Looking into the camera is just my taste. I have been making movies because it suits my taste. I just made them as I wanted, and people should do the analyzing."

“Cut the Human Body and Dark Blood Will Flow”

At present day, KIM Ki-young is a rare spiritual leader to those directors who are leading the modern Korean films, so-called 'generation without mentors'. BONG Joon-ho and PARK Chan-wook were especially influenced by KIM. BONG has fully absorbed KIM's films, memorizing most scenes in his head, and grotesque artistry taste of PARK Chan-wook is indebted to KIM Ki-young as well. Moreover, artistic features of KIM Ki-young, who consistently realized his proposition of 'film as taste', while not neglecting the genre convention, had inspired modern Korean film directors. KIM Ki-young's personality ironically stands out in movies like *Promises* (1975), a remake of LEE Man-hee's *Full Autumn* and *Goryeojang* that took its theme from Japanese movie *Narayama Bushiko*. Belonging to no sect and like he said "playing along one's own taste and not art", absurd ideas and originality of KIM Ki-young is shocking even by today's standards. Back in the day he had summarized his films by saying "cut the human body and dark blood will flow." Of course those words are nonsense, yet they come true in his world.●



Woman of fire



Chungnyeo



Carvivorous Animal

A film festival with friendly touch

When I made my first visit to Pusan International Film Festival (PIFF) as a reporter, it was quite different air from than it does now. People remembering old times in the biggest Korean harbor city would probably agree with what I am about to say. Back then, main stage of the festival was Nampo-dong, an hour-away from Haeundae, the central hub of the festival now. Still, there are some screenings and events for audience in the area during the festival. Nampo-dong, famous for its biggest traditional fish market and a square led by small, old paths, was loved by all the guests for its unique color, although it looks little cramped and unpolished. Every night, film professionals from all around the world were gathered in groups and having pleasant talks with drinks at taverns or snack and liquor stalls on the street until very late. Among them, there was always KIM Dong-ho, PIFF director, who raised his glass with smiles.

As PIFF grew to a mega film festival, its landscape has also changed, mainly due to moving main venues to Haeundae, which is one of the most famous tourist spots of the country. Although it is inevitable for the festival to change its stage to transform into a mega international event, some of the festival guests feel sorry for allowing uniquely passionate and friendly spirits to fade away. A shot of soju at street stalls is replaced by high-end wine in hotel banquet halls. Small, casual gatherings of three or four people are summoned to bigger, official occasions. Apparently, some of us have discomfort against this transformation, as it was quite unforgettable that the earlier PIFF set an amazing stage of communication in the unique spaces of Nampo-dong.

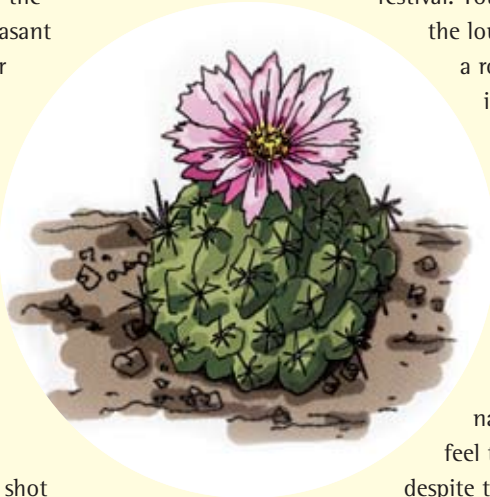
With all these complaints, nevertheless, I don't believe the spirit and meaning infused in the festival by spaces of Busan faded away. Undoubtedly, despite rapid changes in its character and size, PIFF still gives a special set of emotion to the people on the beach who come for the festival. For 10 days Haeundae is reborn as a very special space from blend of the local's indigenous styles and oversea guests' enthusiasm. Although stalls are out of the picture now, it is quite common to witness scenes where people

sitting on the shore and having drinks on set of dark sea at night. Some of taverns near the beach got famous, too. Now we hear less complaint from people who still prefer the festival's old days in Nampo-dong.

Despite changes in its environments, there is nothing wrong with PIFF's symbolic role for its cultural significance in Korea. PIFF is a sort of holy land for cinephiles' pilgrimage. Venues are crowded with young people rushing from every different town of the country just to see new films and filmmakers in admiration. Take a look at Jjimjilbang(a Korean-style public bath) during the festival. You will see a bunch of youngsters sleeping on the lounge because they could not book or afford a room overnight. It is definitely one of the key ingredients that nourished the festival strongly and brought its success.

Although it is the ultimate goal for all the film festivals to become a place where audience and film professionals can communicate via films, I believe PIFF is the most dramatic event that I can witness it with bare eyes. Whenever I am in Q&As after screenings when audiences ask questions with naïve yet passionate curiosity, when filmmakers feel the heat from the floor and answers with joy despite the language difference, it is pretty obvious to me that PIFF will stay forever as a special, energetic place.

Whenever I am asked by others why I visit PIFF every year, without hesitation, I answer that I go down there to meet people. I go to Busan to meet friends from China, Japan and Singapore that I missed for a year. I go to Busan to feel the true moment of bonding, to notice what the contemporary cinema tells me, and probably to have more. Beyond all of these thrills, I cherish the feeling of friendly touches of Busan the most.☺



CHOI Kwang-hee, Editor-in-chief



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